PEOPLES of the EARTH

volume fifteen

Western and central Asia

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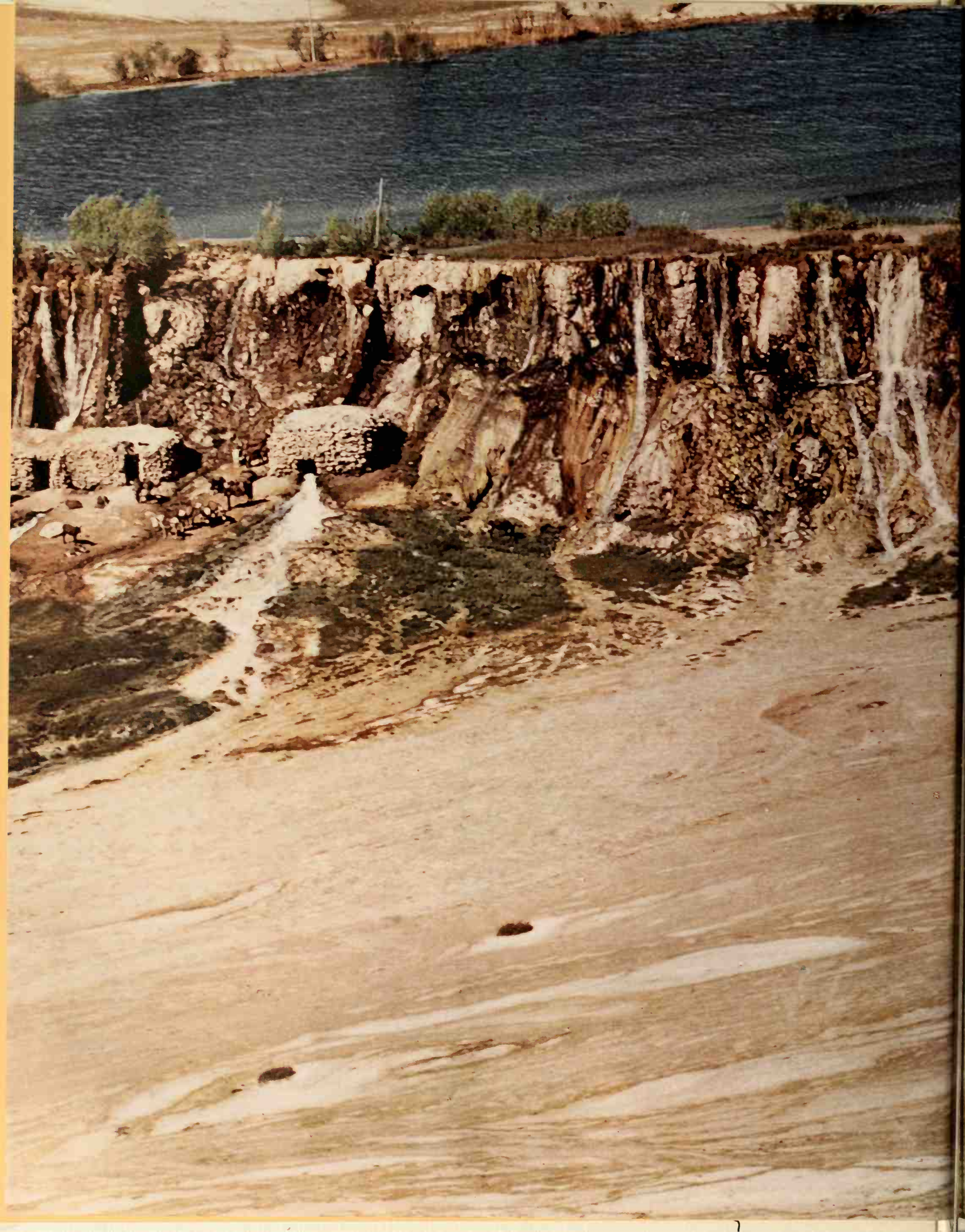

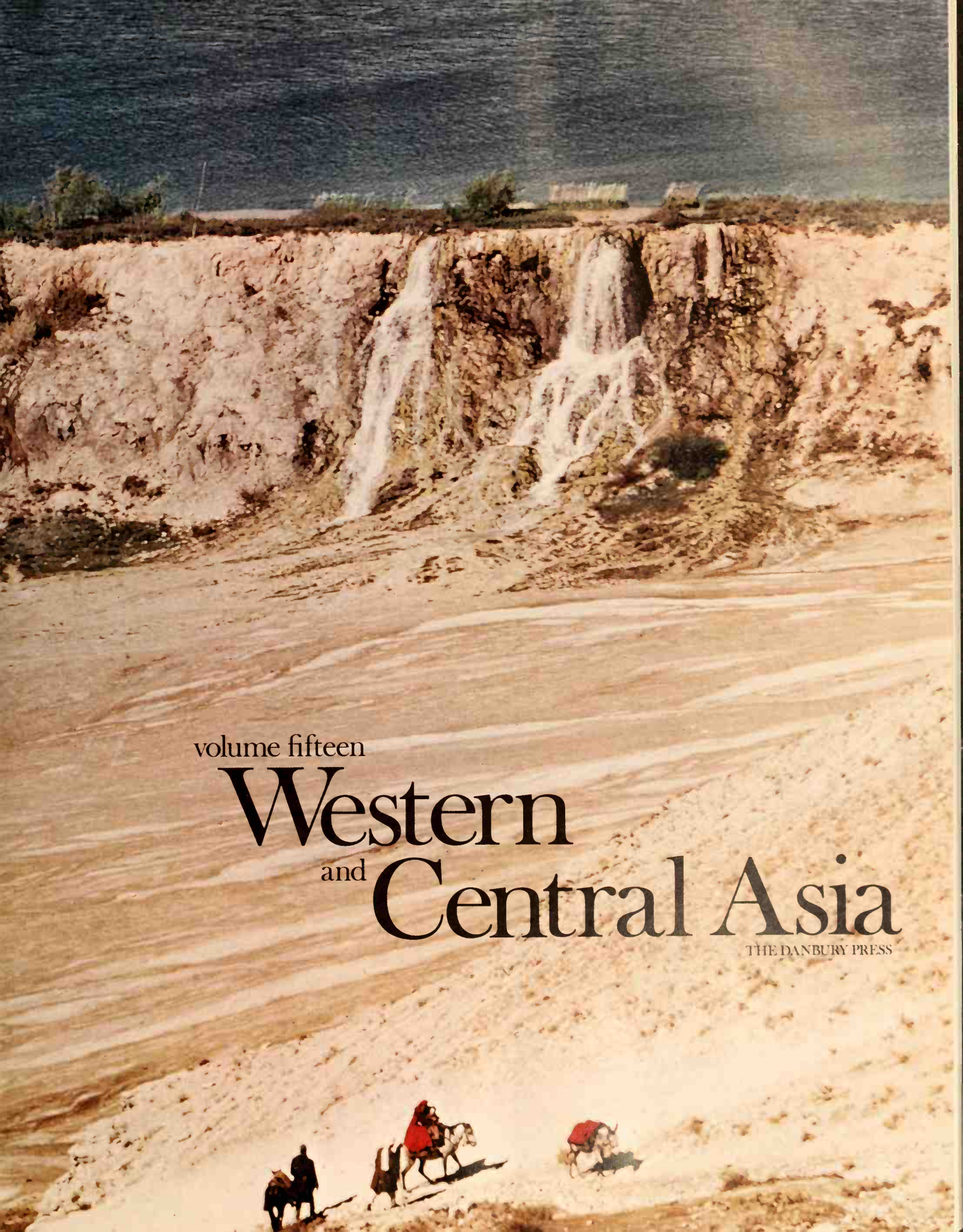

volume fifteen

Western and Central Asia

THE DANBURY PRESS

(Preceding page) Afghanistan legend tells how the hero Hazrat Ali flung down the top of a mountain to build the dams which form the five lakes of Band-i-Amir in the Hindu Kush.

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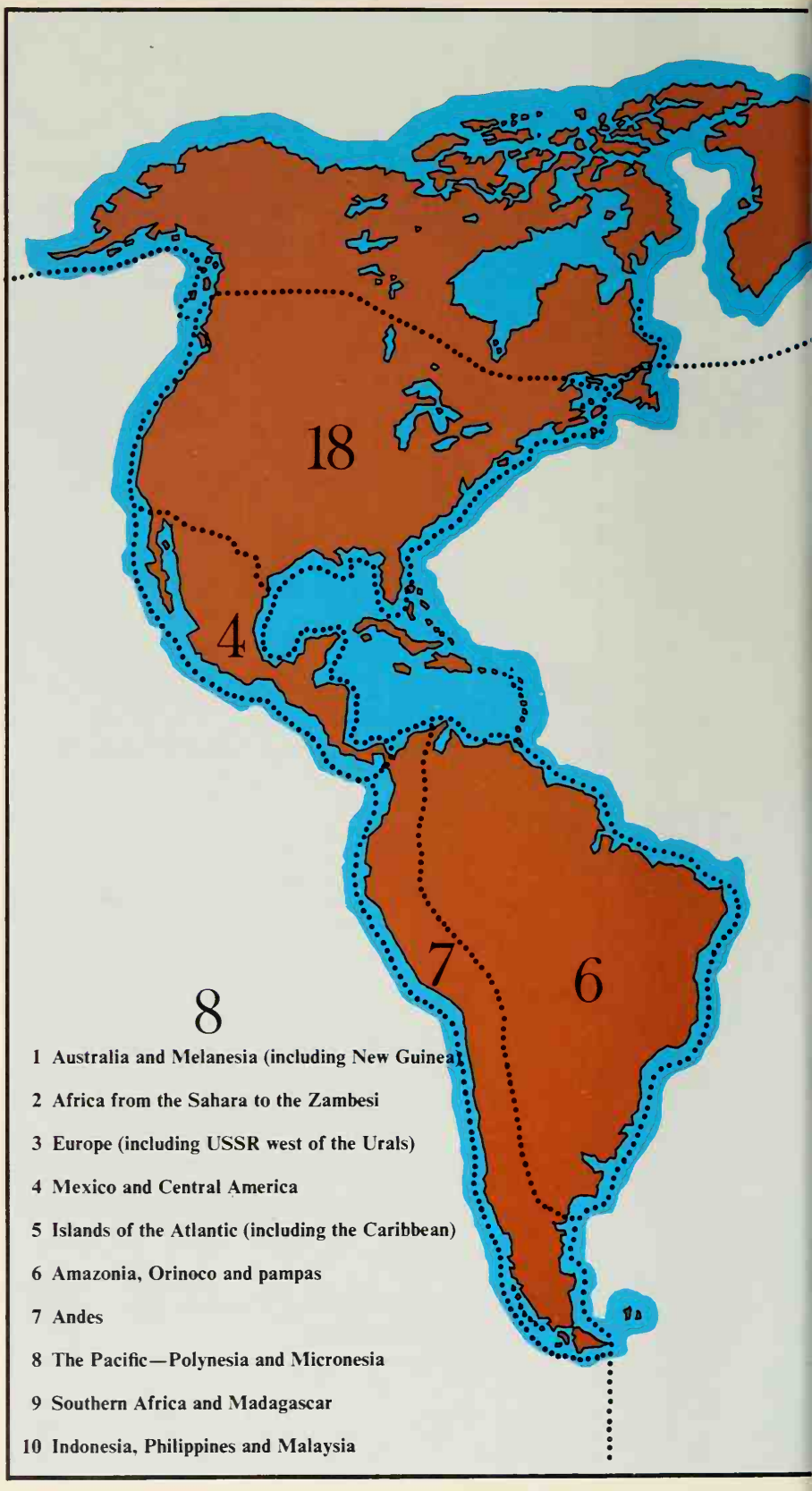
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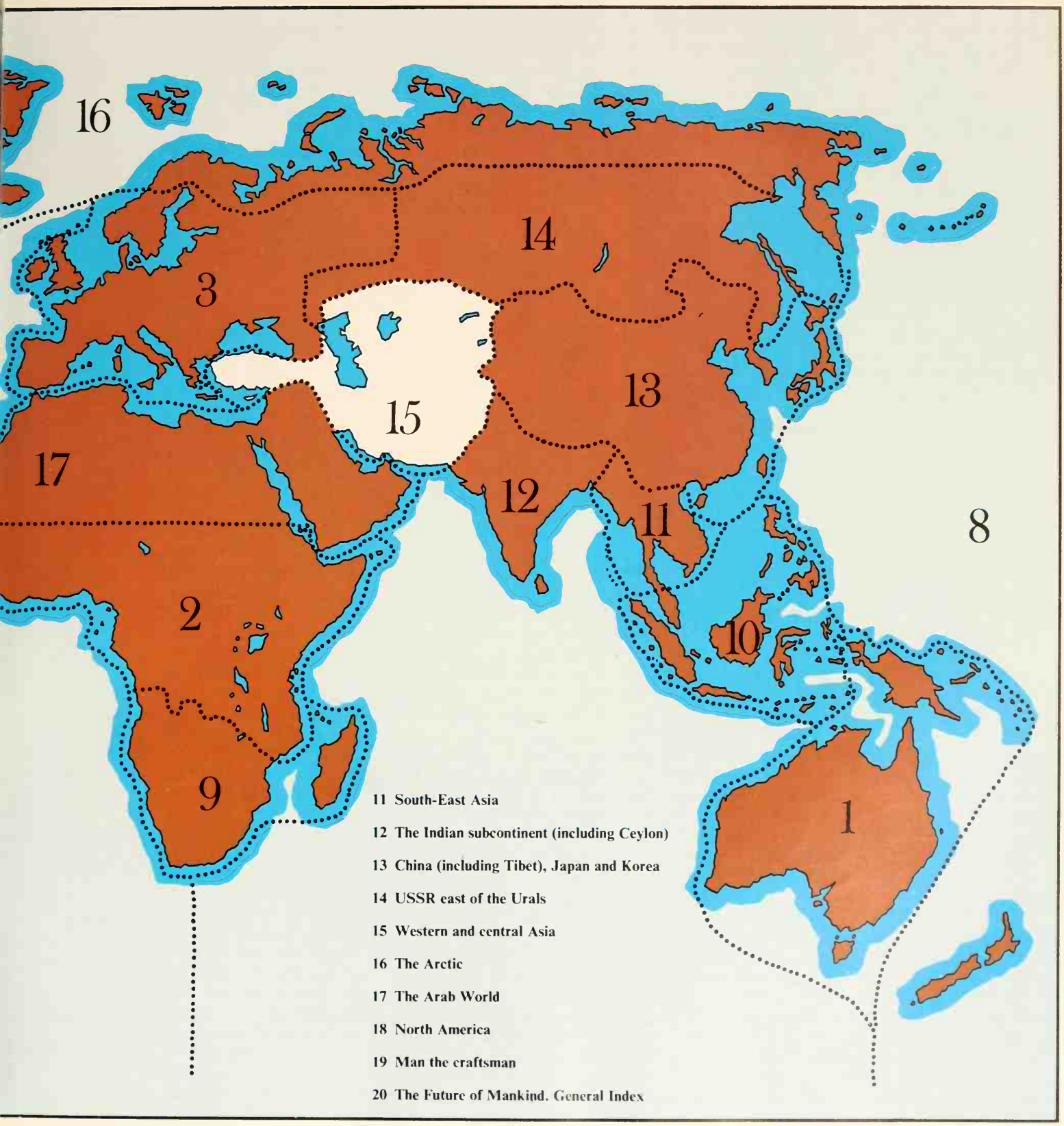

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What is nomadism?

Pastoral nomadism is a way of life that has evolved in regions too dry, too elevated or too steep for agriculture. The nomad makes use of land that might otherwise be neglected. He moves regularly with his flocks or herds according to seasonal variations in climate. His animals, through their meat or their milk, provide him with a substantial part of his diet. He builds no permanent dwelling. His life is hard. He has very few material possessions as he is constantly on the move. He eats simple food. Often milk alone is his staple, for meat is too great a luxury since his animals represent his capital. To use them for meat is to destroy his livelihood. He must manage when water fails or if his flock or herd contracts an epidemic. Among many of the Beduin water is always scarce and can be used only for drinking. The Koran prescribes sand for daily ablutions, but many use animal urine for washing. When life becomes too hard for them many nomads die and others have to relinquish their way of life and take menial jobs in the surrounding villages or towns.

The world's nomadic population is undergoing increasing pressure. In the recent past forcible measures have been taken to settle nomads in permanent homes, in Iran and Turkey for example, and of course in Russia. Governments find they cannot control them and do not like the power they wield. Many nomads are under pressure from companies searching for oil in their natural grazing grounds. Yet it can be argued that many nomadic areas, especially areas where there are no natural resources, are unsuitable for any activity other than pastoral nomadism. The presence of nomads means that at least some products, like wool, meat and milk, are being produced from land that would otherwise be entirely barren.

Central and south-western Asia has traditionally been the home of probably the largest number of the world's nomads. Most of the rest live in northern Africa. There are others in central and southern Africa, southern Europe, northern Scandinavia and Siberia. In this enormous area—stretching from southern Africa to the Arctic Ocean, from the Atlantic to the borders of China—there are also many people who make their living largely or partly by keeping and exploiting domestic animals. But because they build permanent homes and have interests in the property they own they are not true nomads.

Some of them certainly have a way of life similar to nomads, for they migrate seasonally with their flocks or herds. In northern Africa, for example, there are such peoples as the Nuer. The Nuer move their animals in the dry season to the few water-holes in their territory and move them back again to the higher ground in the wet season. In the mountainous areas of southern Europe and western Asia are people who, with their flocks, seek the high pastures in summer and bring them down the mountains to the shelter of the valleys in the cold of winter. But their homes and the property they own give these people attitudes towards their environment which are fundamentally different from those of nomads. They are called transhumant people.

Although what follows here concentrates on the proper nomadic way of life, much of it also applies to transhumant people in so far as they move seasonally to provide fresh pasture for their animals.

To catalogue the names and sizes of all these nomadic and transhumant people and give detailed areas of their distribution would be impossible, largely because groupings do not always correspond to a classification of their way of life. Many Turkomen, Kurd, Baluch and Beduin, for example, are nomadic. But these tribal names include many people who are not nomadic at all. Many are farmers and others live in towns. In fact it is rare to find entire tribes who are exclusively nomadic. Most areas tend to support two or more ways of life, each of which adapts to the environment in a different way. In the Middle East farming villages are frequently scattered through nomadic territory where, furthermore, the nomadic populations are not stable. The boundaries and size of nomadic groups and of the tribes with which they are associated are constantly changing. They change in response to fluctuations in climate and to factors like political security and the growth and decline in the populations themselves.

Although all nomads and most transhumant populations have traditionally lived so close to each other that their territories, which range over so much of Eurasia and Africa, almost overlap, they are not for that reason recognizably similar or related to each other. At a glance the various nomadic populations of the world have little, if anything, in common. They are nomads, that is all. Even within a single culture area like the Islamic Middle East, there are great cultural differences between the different nomadic groups. There are differences in their migration patterns, in the type of animals they herd, in what these animals produce, in their social and political organizations and in the relations they have with their settled neighbors. These differences may result from the ways different groups have adapted to widely differing environments. Underlying these cultural differences there are also certain similarities. These similarities result from the nomads' responses to the problems of adaptation to their environments.

Although the nomad depends on his natural environment for food he does not get his food directly from the land as hunting and gathering peoples do. He relies on his animals to produce his food for him. They eat the grass and other vegetables and turn it directly into protein as milk and meat. The nomad either consumes the milk and meat or he turns the animal products into cheese or butter, leather or skins. If nomads live close to farmers they may concentrate on selling meat or cheese to the villagers, because in return they may be given grain. But if they are isolated and have to live on what

they produce themselves, they may keep their animals, so that they give a daily supply of milk. A nomad keeps the type of animal that is best suited to his environment. Each species of domestic animal makes different demands. Cattle, for example, need lusher grazing than sheep. Each species has a different life cycle and supplies different products. Which of those products the nomad concentrates on depends on whether or not he can sell them.

The grain crops on which nomads depend, as they do not generally subsist on animal products alone, change as one moves from south to north through the nomadic area. In the south millet is most important to the nomad's diet. In the Sahara, the Middle East and central Asia it is wheat bread, while in Siberia pastoral products are supplemented by fish and wild plants.

Nomadic people are also identified with different cultural systems. The most conspicuous distinction is between Muslim and non-Muslim people. But there are other distinctions—for example, between Arab, Iranian and Turkic groups – which involve quite fundamental aspects of the ways in which their societies are organized.

Just as the grain crops on which nomads rely change from area to area so do the animals they herd. South of the Sahara in Africa most nomads rely mainly on cattle to give them a daily supply of milk. They keep as many animals as they can so that even if only a few produce well, some at least will always be in milk. By having large herds they also lessen the chance of losing all their animals in an epidemic or drought. A large herd is like a walking bank account. When all else fails the animals may be eaten as they die.

As one moves from the lusher pastures of the savanna northwards the climate becomes more unfriendly. In the east African territories lying between the savanna and the Sahara, it is drier and the rainfall is more unreliable. But still nomads herd cattle.

Further north into the Sahara there is not only less rainfall; the rainfall also becomes even more irregular and unreliable. Gradually the nomads rely on camels rather than on cattle, for though the camel's endurance and its ability to go without water have been exaggerated, it is better adapted to an extreme desert climate than any other domestic animal. Goats, which desert nomads herd in small numbers come a close second. But they cannot travel such great distances in search of new pastures as camels can.

North-east of the Sahara on the Iranian Plateau in central Asia, and on the northern side of the Mediterranean where seasonal rainfall is more reliable and pastures are lusher sheep become the nomads' most important animals. Here on the Iranian Plateau, and in much of the Middle East and in the Mediterranean region, it is also characteristic of nomads that they live in relatively close economic contact with settled peoples. Here they pasture their animals in the open spaces between villages. In some of these places nomads have symbiotic arrangements with villagers: a villager may, for example, allow the nomad's herds to graze the stubble of his wheat fields in return for the droppings which fertilize the soil for the coming year.

Some nomads cultivate and produce their own grain which provides them with such an invaluable supplement to their animal-based diet. But as cultivation is often difficult to fit into the nomadic cycle a close economic relationship with grain producers provides a convenient solution. The villagers in return also need certain of the nomad's products, especially butter and ghee. On some parts of the Iranian Plateau, especially among the Baluch, some nomads have a close trading relationship with individual farmers. The farmers visit the nomads' camps in the spring when milk is most plentiful. And the nomads return their visits at the end of the summer. This is the hardest time of the year for them. The pasture is dried out by the arid heat of the summer. Surface water on which both men and animals depend is scarce. At this very time, however, the villager often has plentiful stocks of grain and, more important, it is also the time of the date harvest.

Dates are an important crop for the nomad throughout much of the Middle East. They are highly nutritious and are easy to store and transport. They might also seem an ideal crop for the nomad to cultivate since, compared to grain, they require little attention and a single tree produces large quantities of fruit. But although many nomads have a few palms here and there, all large date palm plantations, and almost all date palms, are owned and cultivated by settled people. A date palm represents a piece of fixed property; an investment that must be defended. It is therefore better for a nomad to maintain a relationship with settled people who cultivate palms and get his dates that way than to make himself responsible for palms he could not defend without modifying his way of life.

Defense of property and security have frequently caused major problems of conflict between farmers and nomads who live in close contact with one another. The farmer must defend his fields or plantations because he depends for his livelihood on them. The nomad is conditioned by his way of life not to respect such interests. He does not value such fixed resources because he himself does without them. He values his animals. He is not even very interested in conserving pastures. And so hostility, offset to some extent and in some cases by the economic relationship between them, has characterized the history of relations between nomads and settled populations. Even when economic relationships have been cemented by marriage they have tended not to last very long.

Although the two ways of life are ideologically opposed and have encouraged hostility there is evidence of economic contacts beteen farmers and nomads leading to farmers becoming nomads and nomads becoming

farmers, especially in the Middle East. Nomads and cultivators may despise and mistrust one another. But since both nomads and farmers are affected by fluctuating resources there tends to be a continual movement of individuals and families between nomadic and settled populations who are in economic contact with each other. When cultivators, for example, suffer drought to the extent that everyone cannot be supported, they have no option but to leave the agricultural niche. Since most cultivators also keep some animals they usually move off with those animals and make them the basis of a new nomadic way of life. In times of widespread insecurity in the Middle East, as after the Mongol invasions in the 13th century, there appear to have been similar results and an increase in the numbers of nomads can be detected in historical records.

Nomads may also in certain circumstances become cultivators. A nomad whose flock is reduced so low by drought that he cannot live from it may drift into the nearby village as a day-wage laborer. Or, at the other end of the scale, a nomad whose flock grows beyond a size that he can herd himself may sell the excess animals and invest the proceeds in land. Having invested in fixed property he becomes interested in its welfare and so becomes attracted towards a settled life to ensure that he makes the most of his investment.

The option of settling down or becoming farmers is not open to all nomads. Where agriculture is not, as in most nomadic areas, a viable alternative the nomads survive by receiving animals from other herding groups. There is a complicated system of reshuffling so that all individuals have at least some animals. Animals are passed from one to another according to which people are related through their fathers' lines of descent. As a man's paternal ancestor is often remembered from many generations back he does have a lot of people – some very distant – related to him. The animals, which are his means of subsistence, also become a means of communicating with other members of his society, whom he might otherwise have nothing to do with. In this situation the nomad is not wholly dependent on his own herd or flock but on the herds and flocks of all his people.

In central Asia north of the Iranian Plateau where sheep are, as they are further south, the most important animals for nomads they also herd horses, the Bactrian or two-humped camel and, in mountainous regions, the yak. Here the severe central Asian winter demands special provisions for the animals. During the hard winter, when the animals cannot graze because of snow, the animals must be fed and sheltered. And there is a shortage of pastures as the growing season is so short. As the nomads have to cut hay for winter feed and, under Russian influence, build permanent winter shelters, they become diverted from a strictly nomadic way of life. Recently they have helped the Soviet programs for denomadizing central Asia.

In Siberia and northern Scandinavia, nomadic pastoralists herd reindeer in an exceptionally harsh environment that will not support any other domestic animal or plant. Here there are few alternative livelihoods open to them.

Having seen some of the obvious differences between nomads arising from the different ways they adapt to particular natural environments a number of similarities also become apparent. Nearly all nomads either own pasture communally or not at all. Individuals own animals. Nomadic herders do not purposefully change their environment in any way. They do not invest time, energy or wealth in their surroundings and so they do not individually own any fixed objects. Whereas non-nomadic peoples' social relationships tend to be dominated by their interests in fixed objects – a man who owns more land than he can manage himself might take on hired labor, so that a relationship of landowner and laborer emerges – they do not condition nomads' social relationships.

What influences nomads' social relations is something entirely different, although it is also an ecological factor. Studies of sheep nomads in the Iranian area, for example, have shown that many factors – how many animals the pasture can feed, the skill of the shepherd and the behavior of the animals – combine to determine the maximum size of a flock in any given place. Sheep seem to be more contented and produce better if they are kept in large numbers. If the flock drops below a certain number the sheep tend to waste away. But if the flock gets too big it is difficult to keep them together. The size of the flock is bound to change continually from year to year through the normal processes of birth and death, which are from time to time accentuated by drought, epidemic or an exceptionally fertile year.

Not only is there a maximum size for the flock; there is also a maximum number of people who can comfortably live off the flock. The number of people depends on what the flock produces and how many men, women and children are needed to look after it. As the flock changes in size so also the size of the nomadic group must be reshuffled with other groups. Only by this reshuffling can the right number of men – owning the right number of sheep and who bring with them the right number of women and children – assure the survival of the group.

Because of this, nomadic society must be homogenous. There must be no marked differences of status between members which would inhibit this constant reshuffling of people between one group and another. It must be a fluid society. There are exceptions. Some of the nomadic societies of northern Africa, for example, are clearly stratified into classes: the noble or upper class nominally controls all the pasture and grazing and employs everyone else in herding groups throughout the territory. But according to some studies made over a considerable period of time even these class distinctions are less rigid

than they are claimed to be in native ideology. Furthermore, a man identifies less with his local herding group than with a larger social grouping based on his lineage and genealogy. Whereas cultivators tend to identify themselves by the name of their villages, nomads tend to identify themselves with an overall group, who might be dispersed over a wide area. There is constant movement within this group and within the territory which it inhabits.

Contrary to popular belief no nomads wander at random. The local groups with their flocks or herds move according to a definite seasonal pattern. The distance and range within which they wander seasonally is more restricted among some groups than others. There is always a definite seasonal movement, determined by the changes from a hot summer to a cold winter, or from a wet season to a dry season. As well as this movement of local groups, there are individuals who constantly move around independently. They leave their group to search for stray animals. Or they may go off to visit relatives in other camps, to attend weddings and other rites of passage, to trade, make pilgrimages to shrines, or to seek out government officials. Complicated codes of hospitality have evolved so that nomads may journey in safety. A stranger who comes to a camp is received into the tent of the senior member. This man feeds him and lets him rest there for up to three days without demanding any explanation. If the stranger stays for more than three days he immediately becomes a client of his host and is in a position of inferiority to him. He may perhaps be seeking political asylum. In Baluchistan in Pakistan, the expression 'to enter a tent' is synonymous with seeking asylum. A request 'to enter a tent' cannot be refused with honor. A guest's safety continues to be his host's responsibility for as long as his host's food remains in his stomach.

The characteristic fluidity and mobility of nomadic peoples on which their ability to reshuffle themselves to adapt to their environment depends is now on the decline, largely due to conflicts between farmers and nomads. The rise in recent years of nationalist governments, bolstered up by modern weapons, has also threatened many of the conditions essential to the nomadic way of life. For governments are promoted by settled people. They are staffed by settled people. And they are bound to want to control access to all the country's natural resources. Although nomadic people may be recognized as contributing to a wider national economy through their production of animal protein, they are generally viewed with suspicion. They are mistrusted because they remain independent, impossible to control, and because they have a long history of hostility with settled governments.

Peoples of western and central Asia

The people of western and central Asia, the people of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Soviet central Asia, live in about one fifth of the Asian landmass. And although the area in which they live rubs up against, blends into and is influenced by four major cultural areas – eastern Europe, the Arab near east, south Asia and the far east – it has distinctive characteristics of its own.

Although modernization and industrialization have had varying degrees of influence on western and central Asia the peasant-tribal societies still dominate the cultural scene. The majority of the people spend most of their time engaged in basic food production, either by agriculture or by herding or, more commonly, by combinations of the two.

Farming and herding are both influenced by the availability of water, high mountains with heavy snowfalls – and subsequent melt-water and inhospitable deserts. Western and central Asia consists of a series of mountains and plateaux dividing north from southern Asia west of the Himalayas. The plateaux are separated by mountains which range out from two disembodied masses: the Pamir Knot in the east, and the Armenian Knot in the west. The land surface is overlaid with alluvial deposits of silts, gravels, clays and thick wind-born loess, particularly in central Asia. In most places above 14,000 feet, bare rock dominates. The high ground seldom falls to 1,200 feet above sea level.

There are few genuine irrigation systems in the mountains. Wherever possible the farmers use elaborate terracing or water-catchment areas to help cultivate the land. In the foothills and plains the people practise two types of irrigation. In the adjoining Irano-Afghan-Pakistani areas, specialists construct and maintain *qanat* (or *karez*) which lead water to the surface above the normal water table and allow large tracts of marginally arable land to be reclaimed. *Qanat* are tunneled-out underground canals connected by deep wells which, from the sky, resemble rows of anthills.

Along main rivers, such as the Indus, Hilmand-Arghandab and Karun open canals (main, lateral, feeder – plus the necessary drainage ditches) carry the water away from the rivers. In these and other areas the huge hydro-electric dams, generators and reservoirs have usually been western-inspired, if not partly western-financed. The Chinese, incidentally, are helping the Afghans in one such project. And in Pakistani Punjab and Sind, intricate tube well systems maintain a stable water table, often in conjunction with open canal systems.

As the irrigation systems vary regionally, so do the crops. Wheat-barley with rice and maize are cultivated wherever possible. And the farmers increasingly cultivate large varieties of vegetables, fruits (particularly fine melons in some areas), and nuts (pistachios are a major Iranian and minor Afghan export). Several varieties of cannabis and opium remain economically and socially important crops. In passing it must be mentioned that south-west Iran has an additional resource. It virtually floats on a sea of oil.

There are two broad main categories of people in western and central Asia. There are the sedentary peoples of the cities, towns and villages. And there are the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples who roam with their flocks. The sedentary people have settled in two types of places, all of which center on the availability of water and on strategic importance, as well as on historical accident. In the well-watered regions where the foothills meet the plains there is a nuclear settlement pattern; villages cluster about a town; a complex of villages and towns cluster about a city. But along the major rivers there is a linear settlement pattern: the villages are strung out like a necklace of beads.

Western and central Asian villages, whether they are in the highlands or the lowlands, are nearly always built on non-productive land. In the village people live and work for mutual protection in groups of people related by kinship. The styles of houses vary according to what building material is available. But the basic structure is usually square or rectangular and they are usually built of sun-dried bricks made in wooden molds and covered with mud and straw plaster. The flat roofs are made of pisé (rammed earth) interlaced with twigs and supported by mat-covered beams. Pressed mud walls of varying heights line the meandering village lanes and enclose the houses in small compounds. These walls traditionally ensured protection and privacy, and corraled the livestock at night. Some completely walled villages have watch towers to prevent surprise attacks: feuds are still common throughout western and central Asia. As one moves from the plains up the valleys to the mountains stones replace mud-brick and pisé as building materials. And in the more heavily forested areas of eastern Afghanistan, the Caspian coastal region and Anatolia the people build complicated, wooden, often multi-storey houses.

The villagers produce all the food they need. Except in times of war, famine, flood or epidemic, they are very nearly self-sufficient. Although there are few full-time skilled workers in the villages many farmers are also excellent builders and carpenters. The villagers do depend, however, on the town bazaars, on trading nomads, and on itinerant peddlers for such necessities as iron implements, tea, sugar and kerosene. And when the villagers themselves have local handicrafts, raw materials and surplus agricultural produce to sell they take them on donkeys, horses, camels or on their own backs and heads to sell in the bazaar of the nearest town.

Towns generally grow up where several major trails intersect, although the development today of asphalt highways has somewhat changed this. The town is the local commercial, communications and administrative center of the region. Here the lower grade civil servants –

Most Kazak live in the USSR. They are a fiercely independent people who used to roam the steppes with their herds. Now many of them are 'collectivized'.

the tax collectors, school teachers and quasi-military police – have their headquarters, and so, often, do absentee landlords or their agents. Telephone lines rarely extend beyond the town. And the town bazaar – particularly the tea houses and the caravanserais – are the places where visitors from the rural areas go to pick up information and news. In the town bazaar the villagers can buy goods and services from the ironmongers, weavers, dyers, potters, carpenters, masons, general shopkeepers, tailors, butchers, automobile repairers and caravanserai owners, who all work and live above or at the back of their shops. Some of the goods in the bazaar are finished products brought by lorry from the cities.

Where main roads meet cities develop. They are major commercial, administrative and communication centers linking the interior with the outside world. Large cities tend to be divided into an 'old city' and a 'new city'. The 'old city' is where large guild-like groups of artisans and skilled craftsmen live and work in separate sections of the bazaar. The 'new city' has usually developed in response to the imperialism of the past and the modernization of the present. Often the 'old' and 'new' cities are separated by a river. This is true even in the cities of Samarkand and Tashkent in Soviet central Asia.

The capital cities of western and central Asia are of course the center of government administration. Here partly elected, partly appointed parliaments meet to pass laws, and courts administer justice under new constitutions against a background of changing secular-cum-Islamic law.

Often villagers and nomads come to the city in the off-seasons for agriculture and herding to seek work in the rapidly expanding industries. Some stay only a little while, returning home when the planting starts or the flocks begin to move. But others settle permanently and frequently suffer all the pangs and pains of being economically urban-based while being emotionally and culturally rural-based.

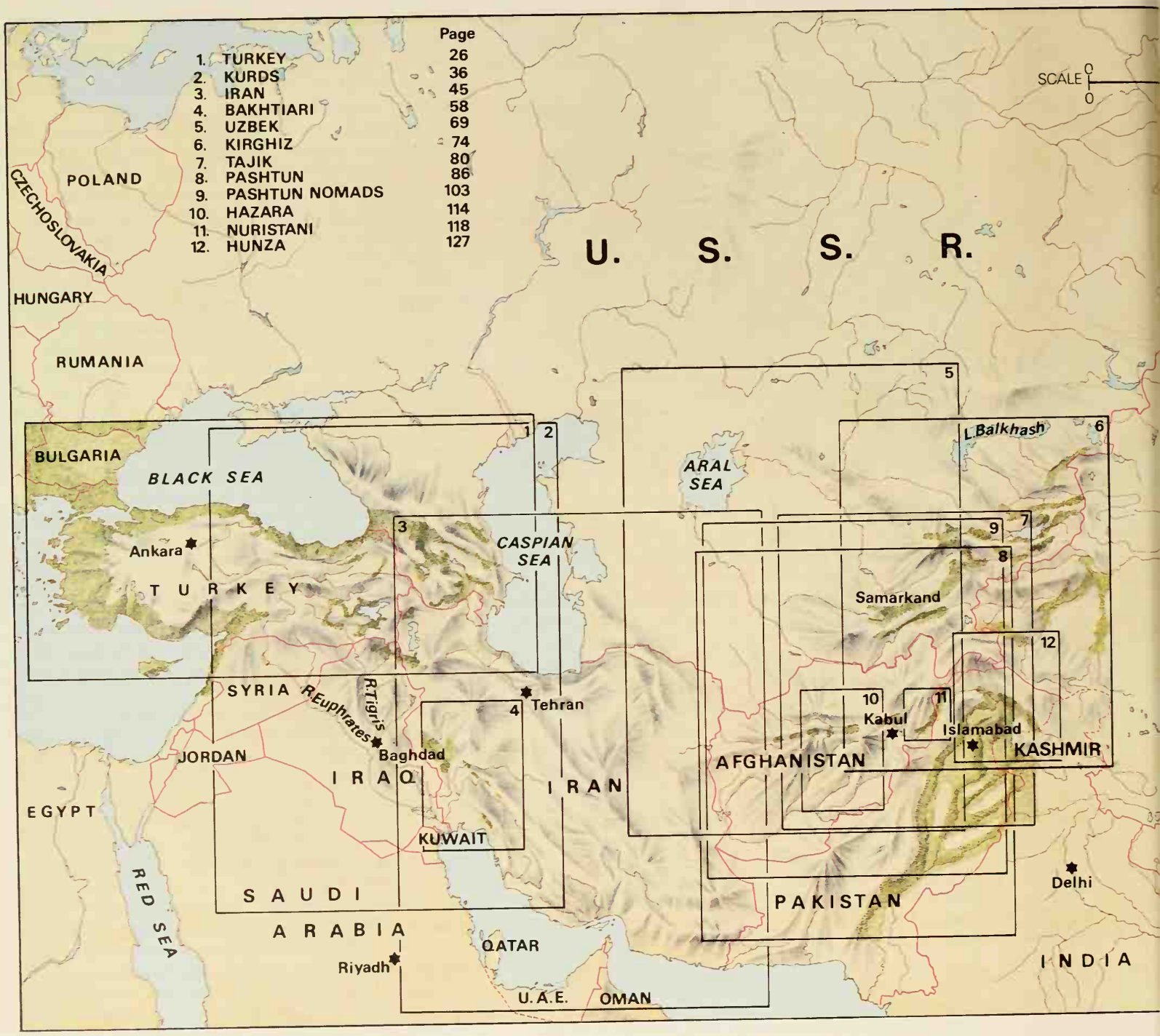
The city grows rapidly, the town more slowly, but the village remains much as it has always been. Most villagers still prefer as little contact with city life and government authority as possible. They have a much closer relationship with the nomads and semi-nomads of their area.

Nomads are herdsmen who move as a group from summer to winter pasturelands and back again and have no permanent dwellings. They live either in black goats' hair tents or in *yurts* which are particularly popular in northern Afghanistan and north-eastern Iran. Most western and central Asian nomads take two months to reach the summer pastures where they camp for a time and then leave, taking another two months to return to the winter pastures. Few nomads move constantly. Most move only seasonally. They tend to keep livestock that adapts most easily to where they live. Sheep and goats suit mountain pastures. Camels and cattle adapt more easily to forest steppes and semi-deserts. Most of the camels are dromedaries, but in parts of Badakhshan and the Wakhan Corridor the nomads herd the two-humped bactrian camel and in the Pamir Knot, the yak. Some water buffalo are used in the wetter regions of northern Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Caspian coast. The most important beast of burden for the nomads throughout the entire area, however, is the donkey. Mules are used less frequently. And the horse is considered everywhere to be a prestige animal.

The relationship between the nomads and the villagers is often mutually advantageous. The nomads visit the villages and bazaars along their routes as they travel, gathering and passing on news. They also bring sheep and goats, skins, dairy products, wool, rugs and kelims which they sell or exchange for the farmers' grain, flour, vegetables, fruits and nuts. Trading nomads specialize in necessities that the villagers require: tea, sugar, kerosene, cloth, matches.

And the nomads are not, contrary to popular belief, parasites on the farmers' lands. Their livestock provides large amounts of fuel and fertilizer in the form of dung. Sheep and goats graze over freshly reaped fields constantly depositing manure. This, when it is plowed under, helps to replace nitrogen in the soil. In addition, the nomads have for generations maintained the 'marginal' grasslands. Because their flocks are constantly moving they do not overgraze the land like those owned by villagers. And again they add valuable fertilizing manure to the land. Without the flocks the hilly marginal grasslands would soon become semi-desert.

Some groups of nomads, particularly since World War II, have evolved into semi-nomads. This has happened when their traditional grazing lands have been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taken over by the government in pursuit of a land reclamation project, or by farmers seeking better land – when fights have occurred. But the farmers have nearly always won as they have the support of well-equipped government armies. To maintain some part of their traditional way of life some nomadic leaders claimed or purchased lands from the governments involved. On this land they have settled. In these circumstances only part of the group goes with the flocks; the rest remain behind and farm. And as a group become semi-sedentary they build mud huts in their winter quarters. Few nomads – if any – however will ever become fully sedentary.

Islam is a dominant force in the lives of the people. It exploded into the region in the mid-7th century AD, and by the 9th century the non-Arab Muslim world of western and central Asia had come into being, enveloping early in its existence the formerly Christian Byzantine Empire of Anatolia, the Zoroastrian Sasanian Empire of Iran, the Buddhists and Hindus of Afghanistan, western India and central Asia. Islam split into two major divisions – Sunni and Shi'a. Sunni and Shi'a again divided into several sects. Most Iranians are Imami (or Ithna Ashariya) Shi'a, as are the Qizilbash, and some Hazara. Many Hazara, however, and most of the speakers of Indo-European dialects of the Wakhan and Badakhshan are Ismailiya Shi'a, followers of the Aga Khan. In western and central Asia, Islam must be considered both at a literate and at a non-literate level. Although there is a great body of literature in Turkish, Persian, Urdu, and Pashtu, the society is basically non-literate. They must depend on interpretations of their literature given by literate religious leaders. Much of the Islam espoused in villages and nomadic camps embodies many pre-Islamic beliefs. Even prehistoric folk-heroes survive locally with Muslim names: Gilgamish becomes the Sharif Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammad and dragon-slayer par excellence; in Christian iconography he becomes St George.

Non-literate, as well as many literate, Muslims and almost all westerners, consider Islam to be deterministic, anti-modern, and anti-progressive. Traditionalist religious leaders who interpret Islam encourage their flocks to accept the deterministic beliefs: all things happen because Allah has willed them; the moving finger writes. The strength of Islam, however, relates more to local than to universal doctrine as it is derived from its submersion in local cultures. The essence of Islam, particularly as it is interpreted by some modernists in western and central Asia, includes much free will. The modernists insist on the importance of beliefs parallel with Judaism and Christianity, the two other great religions which developed at the eastern end of the Mediterranean out of the same culture matrix. These important parallels are a belief in a Supreme Being and order in the universe; the equality of all men before Allah; social justice between men. True, Islam itself means submission, but some modernists claim this does not mean blind, unquestioning acceptance of a predetermined fate, but rather a voluntary acceptance of a way of life after careful examination by the individual believer. The Islam of the village and camp, however, seldom approaches this idealized view of the faith. Some basic customs, such as the in-group blood feud, run completely counter to the essence of Islam, whether traditionalist or modernist.

Most of the people in western and central Asia are non-literate: in Turkey 80 per cent are non-literate, in Iran 80-85 per cent; in Pakistan 80-85 per cent; in Afghanistan 90 per cent; in Soviet central Asia about 50 per cent. And most of these are rural people: in Turkey 75-80 per cent are rural, in Iran and Pakistan 80-85 per cent; in Afghanistan 95 per cent; in Soviet central Asia 70 per cent. The peasant-tribal societies of western and central Asia are therefore, in contrast to the developed world, essentially rural and agrarian.

Literacy, *sui generis*, is not however the answer to precipitate change. Literacy, like a plow or a belief system, is simply a cultural tool and can be used to create and perpetuate a totalitarian régime as easily as it can create a favorable atmosphere for democratic institutions. And even if the bulk of the people were literate, linguistic diversity would still be a major divisive factor.

Turkey uses a latinized script developed almost overnight at the direct order of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. The Soviet central Asian republics use a Cyrillic script. Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan retain a modified Arabic script. And locally oriented dress and ornaments continue to emphasize the special identity and pride of each group. The physical types, however, do blend from zone to zone. Varieties of the Mediterranean substock of the caucasoid group dominate in the west. There is much mongoloid admixture to the east and north-east. There are some australoid influences in Pakistan. And there are areas in Iran and Afghanistan where Brahui are found.

Usually, though not always, people's tribal or ethnic identifications and their languages tend to coincide. Modern Turkey is fortunate that almost all Turks speak Osmanli Turkish of the Uralic-Altaic language family. But in the rest of the modern states of western and central Asia there are myriad ethnolinguistic groupings which often slough across frontiers. Azerbaijani (Azeri) Turks live in north-western Iran and eastern Turkey, with their own Soviet Socialist Republic in the Soviet Union. The Shahsavan (Protectors of the Shah) live in the Moghan steppes south of the Russian border. The Kurdish people, who are also Indo-European speakers, live in Iran, Turkey and Iraq, and in small numbers in the USSR. South of the Caspian Sea towards the Elburz Mountains live several groups who speak Persian dialects: Gilaki, Gilani, Mazanderani.

In the Zagros Mountains, ranging from north-west to south-east, there are, in addition to Persian-speaking villagers (such as the Lur), nomadic and semi-nomadic

A Baluchi boy plays a *sorud*. His people live in Pakistan and Iran. Traditionally they are nomads who despise settled farmers.

groups of other Indo-European speakers (Bakhtiari, Kuh Galu, Mamassani), as well as the Turkic-speaking Qashqai. In north-eastern Iran various groups of Turkoman – Turkic-speaking, aquiline, mongoloid-looking people – live relatively sedentary modern lives compared to the past. There is a separate Turkoman Soviet Socialist Republic to the north, and other Turkoman live in the plains and foothills of north-western Afghanistan.

Along the Tangistani coast of south Iran many groups speak Arabic. Other Semitic 'speakers include the Assyrians, who are Nestorians, and Chaldeans of Iran and Turkey, with some Christian Armenians, who are Indo-Europeans, and Parsees or Zoroastrians who are Persian-speakers – further complicating the picture.

Persian-speaking villagers live on both sides of the Irano-Afghan frontier with groups interspersed among them of Berberi (Barbari) mongoloid-looking peoples who possibly have Aimaq antecedents. In the Sistan Basin of Iran and Afghanistan and adjacent areas of Pakistan live the Baluch and Brahui. A specialized group of Baluch hunter-fishermen called the Sayyad live in the Sistan swamps of the Hamun-i-Hilmand.

Pakistan has four major ethnolinguistic groups: Punjabi, Sindhi, Pushtun (Pathan), Baluch, all of whom are Indo-European speakers who use mutually unintelligible dialects. The Brahui speak a dialect of Dravidian, a language family concentrated south of the Narmada river in India. Urdu and English are the common languages among the intelligentsia.

Several thousand Kafir in Chitral still practise an old pre-Islamic form of animism and nature worship, but the majority live in Afghanistan and were forcibly converted to Islam in 1895-96. They are now called Nuristani, which means 'those who have seen the light'. Four major language families are represented in land-locked Afghanistan: Indo-European, Uralic-Altaic, Dravidian, and Semitic.

The Muslim republics of Soviet central Asia (the Soviet Socialist Republics of Azerbaijan, Kazakstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kirghizia – and the Karakalpak ASSR) have been subjected to great pressures since World War I. Soviet armies subjected them to conquest in the 1920s. These years were punctuated by periodic revolts by the so-called *basmachi* (bandits to the Russians, freedom fighters to themselves). The 1930s saw collectivization of land and modernization, both equated with russification. After World War II ethnic and cultural consciousness increased. Islam, for example, in spite of vigorous anti-religious campaigns, was never stamped out. Islam is not merely a religion but a way of life. Many collective and state farms have mosques. The people prefer traditional clothing. Even in centers like Tashkent the women still wear the horsehair veil in the old city. Free enterprise continues to be important in rural society. Suppression led to large-scale migrations to the neighboring countries of Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and China, and today the Soviet Union is faced with growing demands for 'Tajik power', 'Uzbek power', 'Kirghiz power' and so on.

Few governments in western and central Asia can begin to replace the delicate network of reciprocal social, economic and political rights and obligations which function in groups of kinspeople at the regional and tribal level. In these groups rights and obligations are tightly defined and include everything from the right to name a child to the provision of social welfare and the waging of warfare. Past contacts with the outside world, including central governments, has usually meant one thing to the villagers: extraction of rent and taxes, conscripts for armies, raw materials, labor for projects and women for the harems of the powerful and wealthy. This partly accounts for their constant resistance to change, even in Soviet central Asia.

Within the peasant tribal societies group survival comes before individual choice. An individual's role as leader or follower is determined by his position in his family. Primogeniture is not always the custom. Economically a man usually takes up the same work as his father. And when he marries his preferred mate is his

cousin, or at least somebody from within his tribe. There are occasional exceptions to this – peasants have become kings; Pushtun men sometimes marry Uzbek women – but these are rare. People are bound to the land, which is often controlled by absentee landlords, because of a general lack of mobility. Even nomads, though they travel great distances, lack basic mobility, for they usually move from their winter quarters to their summer quarters and back again, year after year, generation after generation.

From the moment a child is born his position in the family is fixed. As the younger brother or sister he is pampered and loved. But this soon changes. At about the same time when children in western societies are just beginning to prepare for their future roles at school, the western and central Asian is already living his future role in life. Almost overnight he becomes an adult with a full range of social, economic and political responsibilities. There is no time for learning away from the family. The family is the way of life. In western and central Asian rural society the family is three-tiered. The old are respected, for they are the walking encyclopaedias of the society; fathers and mothers represent the economically producing unit (the present); grandparents (the past) teach the children (the future) about their history and customs. Folk-tales and folk-songs are important means of instruction, particularly since most of the people are non-literate. Unlike western folk-songs, the folk-literature of western and central Asia is meant to help perpetuate, not to protest. Again this illustrates the importance of the group over the individual.

Through folk-tales boys and girls learn the ideal personality type. For the male there is the warrior-poet. For the female there is the bountiful mother-helper. Children learn their economic roles from their parents, and from other brothers and sisters whose heavy-handed discipline quickly integrates the younger ones into a society graded by age and sex. Young people in the towns, many of whom are exposed to the individually oriented western education system, are rapidly moving away from the idea of respect for the old.

The kinship system can be described as basically patrilineal – as descent is traced through the father's side of the family; patrilocal – as the bride moves to her husband's house; and patriarchal – as authority rests in the hands of the elders. In reality, however, there are many matri-influences. Most marriages, for example, are endogamous. Although women have little formal public power, behind the mud walls of the compound they exert great influence. The levirate, a custom obliging the brother of a dead man to marry the widow, is still common in some areas. And there is a low divorce rate. Although polygyny is permitted by Islam monogamy is the general practice. Polygyny often has a cohesive social role – for the several wives of one husband tend to be close kin.

People of Istanbul

Turkey

The characteristic summer colors of Istanbul, as seen from a tall building, are still the green of trees and gardens and the soft brick-red of roof tiles. Many of the old wooden houses falling into decay or being swept aside for new buildings are of an intricate beauty in their fretted decoration. Thirty years ago the population of Istanbul was well below one million. Today it approaches 2.5 million, but the built-up area has not increased to anything like the same degree, presumably because many of the new buildings are blocks of flats put up on the sites and gardens of old houses. Little suburban centers like Bebek have greatly increased their population in this way, and by creeping up the hillsides overlooking the Bosphorus.

The population of Istanbul has always been mixed, even in Byzantine and early Ottoman days, not only because of the attraction of the ancient capital but because Byzantine emperors and Ottoman sultans moved populations about to suit their purposes. Aksaray, in the old city, is so-called because people brought from Aksaray in central Anatolia were settled there. Arnavutkoy, on the Bosphorus, is named the Village of the Albanians – who settled there long ago – but it now has a considerable Greek population. Balat has many Jews whose forbears have been there since the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and who speak Castilian Spanish today. There are still Armenians, in spite of the unhappy recent history of that nation, but whereas up to the early 1960s one often saw a newspaper in the strange Armenian alphabet being read or used to wrap up vegetables this is quite rare today. The Poles of Polonezkoy (*Koy* means village in Turkish) still speak Polish and cure bacon. There is still an old-established gypsy population, even though some of their shacks have been demolished in the cause of hygiene. Young gypsy boys play the fiddle at picnic places on popular holidays, whilst their sisters dance to the tambourine. Other gypsies, boys and men, teach the brown bear to perform the clumsy antics claimed to be dancing and look expectantly up to the balconies for coins. To move house the Istanbuli may call on one of the wiry, intense-eyed, dark-haired Kurd, who are the porters of Istanbul. They bend half forward with a sort of padded camel's hump of leather on their backs so that their huge loads won't cut into their skin. And Kurds do much of the laboring on new buildings. They rarely bring their families to Istanbul, but send money back to their mountain homes in eastern Anatolia. Except for the slant-eyed tribesmen who specialize in fur hats and gloves and have recently arrived from central Asia, the Turks who come to Istanbul are surprisingly European-looking. There has hardly been such a melting-pot of races as Asia Minor.

A boy will arrive and get a job as a grocer's messenger. He becomes known and trusted in the quarter, gets a job as a door-keeper to a block of flats, brings his mother from the country to look after him and eventually marries. Men establish themselves as car-washers, stake a claim in a street and make themselves useful in return for some sort of living. A man starts selling vegetables spread out on a big box off a boulevard in a side street – a stepped, cobbled street with no traffic – and he curls up inside the box for the night.

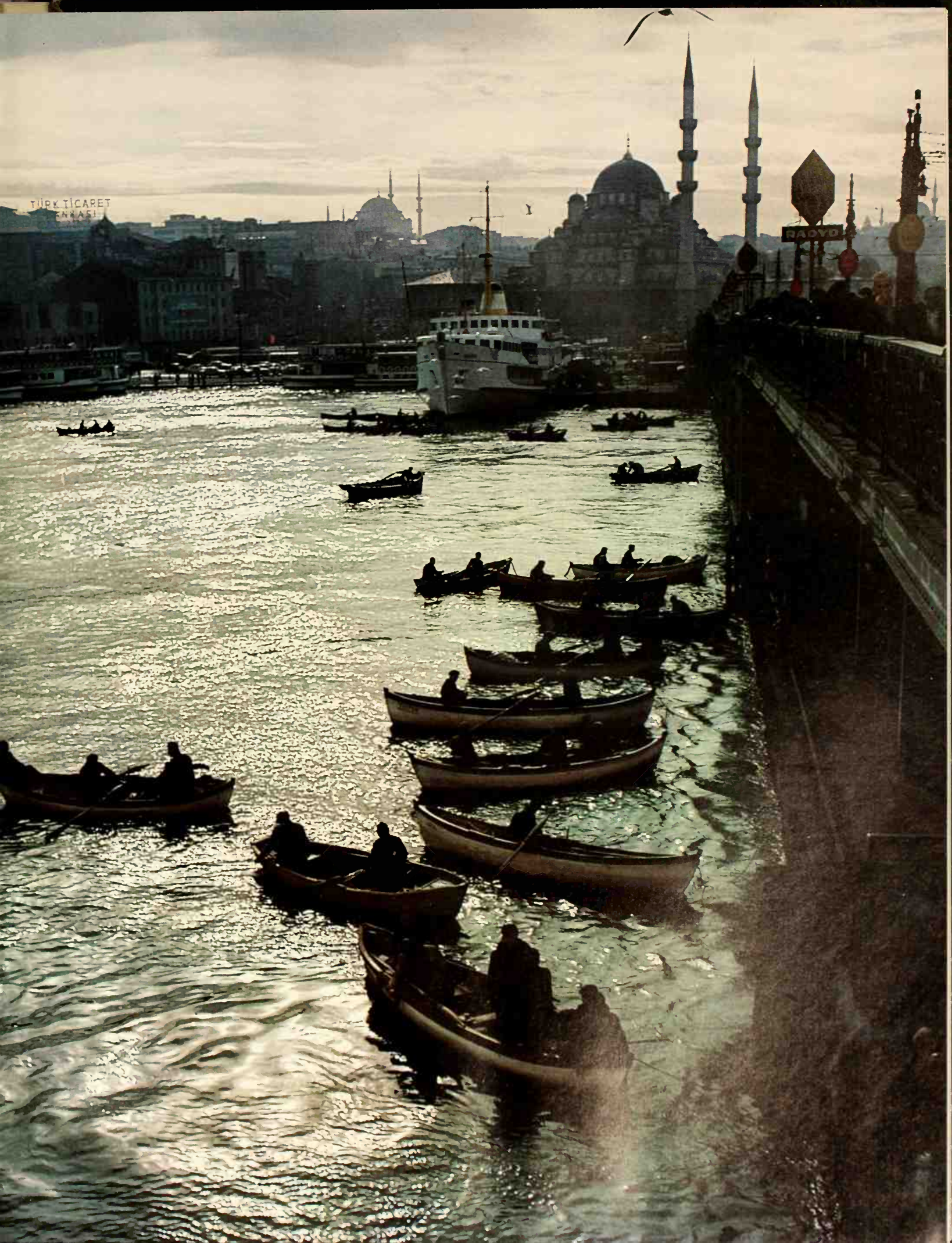
Since Ataturk's revolution all Turks are required to wear European dress. Middle-class men usually wear dark, unadventurous suits and go hatless; working-class men wear poorer suits and dark cloth caps. The newly arrived women, who in Anatolia would still wear their colorful traditional costumes, also conform, but cling to an old propriety by tying a scarf or colored handkerchief over their heads. Middle-aged Turks are silently shocked, whilst the youth of Istanbul openly jeer, at mini-skirted western girls, the long hair, untidiness and half nudity of young western men, and the open fondling of these young people in public.

The old crafts flourish in the city. There are gold and silver smiths and jewelers, coppersmiths, tailors, carpenters, mattress-makers and flockers. The knife-grinder comes to the door with his wheel to give knives and penknives a sharp edge for a few *kuruş*. There are plumbers and electricians, but these are much in demand in Germany and are not always easy to find in Istanbul. Half a dozen cheerful men now make buckets in a 16th century Turkish bath near the Küçük Aya Sofya Mosque and the gleaming new zinc of the stacked buckets catches the daylight from the central aperture in the dome. All these craftsmen have time to stop and talk about their work. Out along the Bosphorus there are fine boat-builders and, in the city, employment at an efficient ship-building yard. There are even market gardeners within the old city walls, for the walls were built to enclose a space which could make the city self-supporting over a long siege. Water was stored in great cisterns and some of the open ones are now gardens or football fields.

The new factories are mostly outside the city. They produce textiles, shoes, tires, medicines and a whole range of things in plastic. Tractors are assembled and cars are produced by building a Turkish body round an imported engine. Radios and sewing machines are made from locally manufactured and imported parts. Working conditions are good in the new factories.

Begging is illegal in Turkey and there are very few beggars in Istanbul. The most conspicuous begging of late years has been by young western Europeans, many of them British, who play the guitar and openly invite contributions towards their expenses. This astonishes and disturbs the Turk, who has been encouraged to look to western Europe for guidance in modernizing himself. The city is no longer tolerant of these young seekers for adventure or drugs. There is little observable prostitution in the city but there are, or were until very recently, some streets of strictly controlled licensed brothels, near the main shopping center, where the Turk will quite often

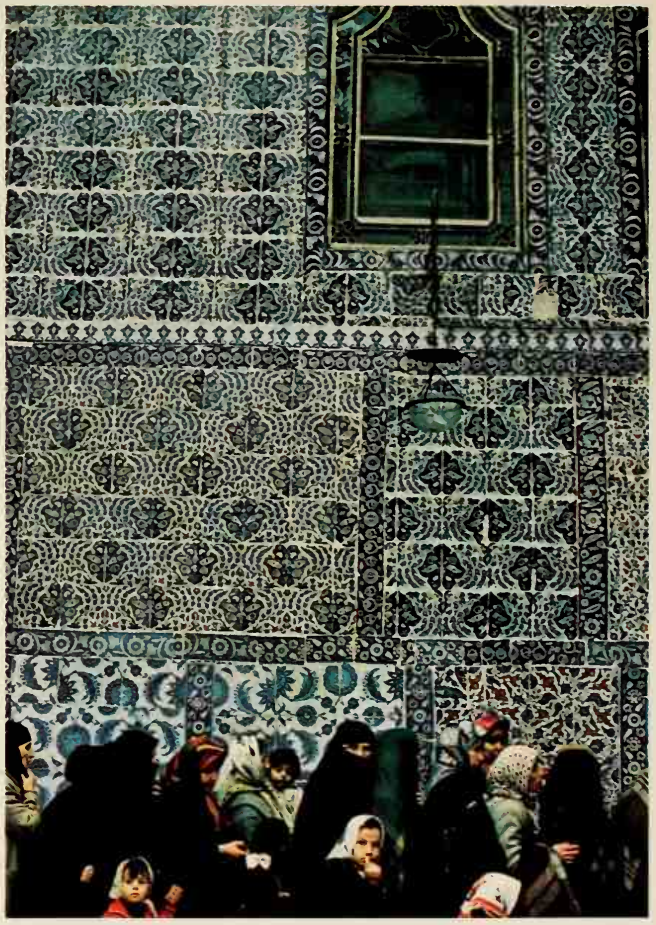
Behind the row-boats and a modern Bosphorus ferry rise the minarets of the Yeni Cami, a Byzantine church turned mosque in old Istanbul.


TÜRK TİCARET
RADYO

The Turk despises western ostentatious sexual freedom; but strip clubs have their clients as well as the more traditional licensed brothels.

The exquisite mosque of Eyup with its serpentine blue tiles is a center for Muslim pilgrims. Its brass gratings are 'kissed shiny by the devout'.

(Bottom) The revolution of Ataturk brought liberation to the young generation of Turkish women. Their mothers still follow Muslim tradition.



favor a middle-aged, motherly woman. There is crime, of course, mostly burglary and car theft for joy-riding, and there are some expert pickpockets and snatch thieves.

An Istanbuli with a few small coins in his pocket need never go hungry or thirsty for long, since, apart from restaurants and sandwich bars, there are small kiosks (a Turkish word) and itinerant vendors to supply him with a variety of refreshments. He likes his fruit drink really pressed from fruit, not colored or synthetic in any way. He buys bottled spring drinking-water at the grocers or queues to fill his bottle or jar at a tapped spring – perhaps with special properties. If he can afford the little extra money he drinks the bottled natural fizzy water, *maden suyu*. He loves and has great faith in *ayran*, yogurt beaten up with water. On a night out the Istanbul Turk will drink raki, a grape spirit distilled with aniseed and liquorice – before, during and after his meal. He regards beer and wine, both of which are good in Turkey, as rather effeminate drinks, but in mixed middle-class parties he will order them too. He has recently become a tea drinker, with sugar but no milk. Although the Turk introduced coffee drinking to the world today his country can produce plenty of tea but no coffee. High import duty has made coffee a prestige drink. In need of refreshment

(Right) Aya Sofia, now a State Museum, is a striking example of a Byzantine church which became a mosque with 20-foot Islamic inscriptions.

Istanbuli porters carry staggering weights and quantities on their backs, protected only by a leather-padded cradle.

Unemployment is a serious problem. Begging is illegal, and men who cannot find work often spend days in idleness smoking their nargilahs.

during the day and in the open air, a Turk will sometimes look for a vendor of pickle-water. This drink, *tursu suyu*, will be ladled for him with much ceremony out of great glass jars on a little push-cart. Until disturbed the pickled vegetables which flavour the liquid present a colorful arrangement. There are portable charcoal grills which will give him *köfte*, a hot meat rissole.

The Turk may not be as aware as a Frenchman that he eats in a great tradition, a tradition of cooking of which Istanbul has been the capital. The world has three great cuisines, French, Chinese and Turkish, and all round the eastern Mediterranean, from Greece through to Egypt and then along the north African coast, there are variants, usually inferior, of Turkish cooking. For the Istanbul Turk a meal is not a thing to be rushed. He may sit in the evening and not leave the table for two or three hours. No management will try to hurry him. *Mezes* will come first, a great variety of tasty little dishes as hors d'oeuvre with raki to drink, ordered by the bottle if he is not alone, and a Turk eating alone is a very rare sight. In good time he will order a grill, *şiş kebab*, gobbets of lamb grilled on skewers over charcoal, or swordfish, *kiliç*, if it is in season, grilled in the same way. The restaurant may specialize in *döner kebab*, cooked with proper ceremony behind a window near the entrance – sliced lamb pressed down on to a perpendicular bar and roasted in front of an upright, barred charcoal fire, the savory meat sliced off as it turns and cooks on the outside. His wife will probably have one of the sticky pastry sweets, *baklava* or *kadayif*. For lunch in the business quarters of the city he may turn in to a simple fish restaurant, possibly on a boat, near Galata Bridge, or reach down from the side ramp of the bridge for a sandwich of fresh tunny fried on a primus in a bobbing boat. The food of the worker, at least during the working day, is usually a loaf of bread flavored with *piyaz*, a salad or stew with chopped lettuce, beans and onions or with a raw onion or tomato.

The Turk likes personal service and the shops of Istanbul are still small. Young married couples will go to the great covered bazaar, Kapali Çarsi, a vast, roofed, traffic-less shopping area with lovely woven things, Turkish pop records, cheap shoes and a glittering street of gold. Couples of all ages will go to the Spice Bazaar, Misir Carsi, for the spices the wife needs in her cooking, for goat's milk cheese from goatskins and preserved meat, *pastirma*, from eastern Anatolia. And everywhere they will find fruit and vegetable stalls, with mountains of delicious oranges in the spring and huge peaches and apricots in summer.

Turks go often to Turkish baths, many of them very old. Some baths are used by both sexes, either on different days or in different sections. He may not be well off, but the Turk, even a struggling student, will have his shoes cleaned, either by boys – beginners who trail round the city with their makeshift boxes – or by established shoe-cleaners with a regular pitch and a beautiful box

In the Seref Stadium in Istanbul these Turks prepare to exhibit their powers and skill at the wrestling competitions.

(Bottom) Wrestling was once Turkey's most popular spectator sport. One of the western influences has been its replacement by football.

decorated with shining brass and colored pictures. Barbers ply a good trade and are to be found everywhere. A regular haircut and shave are necessities to a Turk.

For entertainment the Istanbuli will usually go to the cinema, either to a foreign film or to a melodramatic Turkish film produced on a shoestring. The theater flourishes too and a Turk of today can enjoy, translated into his own language, anything from *There's a girl in my soup* to Beckett's *End Game*. Opera, ballet and celebrity concerts are well attended and the Istanbul father may encourage his daughter to become a concert pianist, launching her, if he can afford to, in a recital with orchestra and bouquet.

But he will not go to see *Karagöz*, as his grandfather did. This ancient puppet show has been ousted, as a popular spectacle, by the cinema. Essentially a tent show, it was brought here from Asia by the Turkish invaders. In it images are projected from behind onto a screen of thin white material. The puppets, made of translucent animal skin and boldly painted, are worked with pieces of cane which cast no shadow on the screen. The sketches deal with everyday life, with touches of social satire but without any political or religious implications. The present-day Turk's grandfather saw grosser comedy than this century has seen, when Karagöz himself had a huge penis which was sometimes put to other uses than the erotic, as a post for tying up a donkey, for instance, and this had the audience rolling on the benches. Karagöz, the chief character, has recently been a poor countryman struggling to make both ends meet. His friend Hacivad has a townish air of pretense to refinement. Houses, mosques and bushes appear as scenery and extraordinary effects of fire and smoke are still produced by the few remaining practitioners.

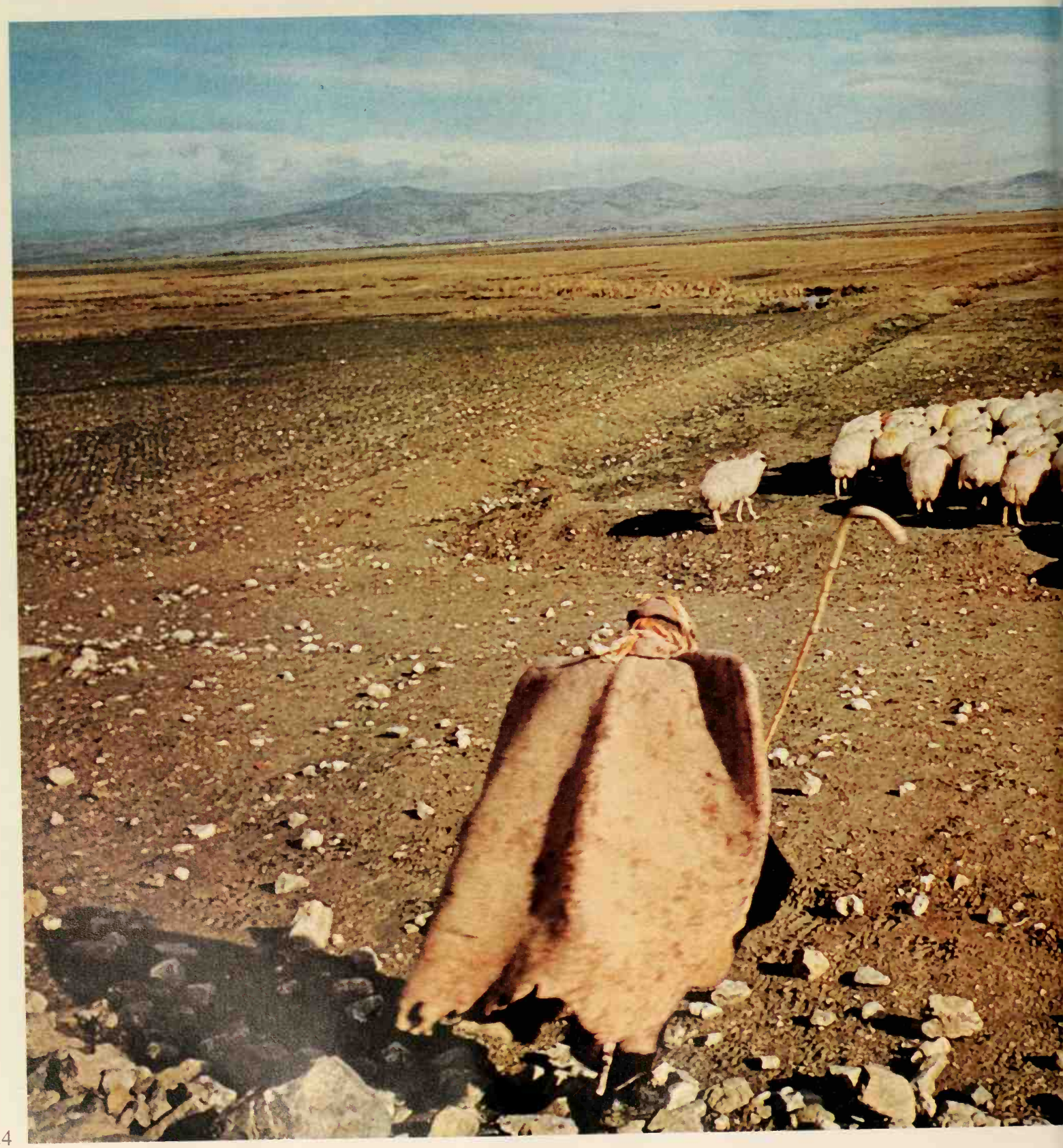
Football has ousted wrestling as the popular spectator sport. Fishing is the pastime which gets most general participation, from small boys on Galata Bridge to well-to-do bourgeois couples who get their tackle out of their cars along the Bosphorus shore. Picnicking in the Belgrad Forest is another passion. Processions are popular, especially children's processions on appropriate holidays, when the children sometimes dance along the street to the drum and pipe. The revived janissary bands give a traditional note to such festivities. Political demonstrations occur as often as they are allowed by the government of the day and they can end in sudden violence if the police and army show partisanship. On Saturdays and Sundays people of all ages, but mostly young men, parade in the Istiklal Caddesi.

Marriage ceremonies are no longer what they were but are conducted in European dress in a municipal setting. The circumcision ceremony *sünnet*, however, still echoes the splendor and gaiety depicted in the colorful 16th century volumes of miniature paintings in the great libraries of Istanbul. The boys are beautifully dressed and wear round, felt-topped bonnets, bright with sequins, for the customary visit to the mosque at Eyup before the operation at home.

Schoolchildren here are neatly and uniformly dressed to make less obvious the great differences in wealth which exist. Turkish boys are treated as adults from an early age and develop confidence and an independent outlook. Young girls are more strictly brought up and since they stay at home more in the evenings and do more homework are apt to do better than the boys in examinations. Even at university age many girls are not free to go out at night. But there is little discrimination against them in professional careers and several departments in Istanbul University are notably headed by women.

The people of Istanbul have learnt to tolerate a considerable swing from winter snow to summer heat. They are sensitive to winds from different quarters and their tempers are sorely affected by the *lodos*, the wind from the south. There always seems to be something going on in this lively city and – if there isn't – anyone with time to spare and a small coin in his pocket can take a ferryboat and visit his aunt or a mosque or a market at Uskudar, over a narrow stretch of water to another continent and another atmosphere.

Turkish villagers



Over 75 per cent of Turkey's population are rural. This Anatolian shepherd's voluminous sheepskin coat protects him in any weather.

In the more remote areas of Turkey, beyond the influence of the government and towns, are independent, self-sufficient villages, where the people grow all the food they need and use the rough natural wool of their sheep to make blankets and clothes. For these villagers the land provides all. They gather loose stones from the hillsides to build the walls of their flat-roofed houses. The wood they need to support the roof they cut down, or more often, because wood is scarce, cull from carefully tended stands of timber grown for the purpose. They transport both stone and wood, and anything else for that matter, in rough wooden carts. These carts have solid wood wheels which are attached to the wooden axles by wooden pins.

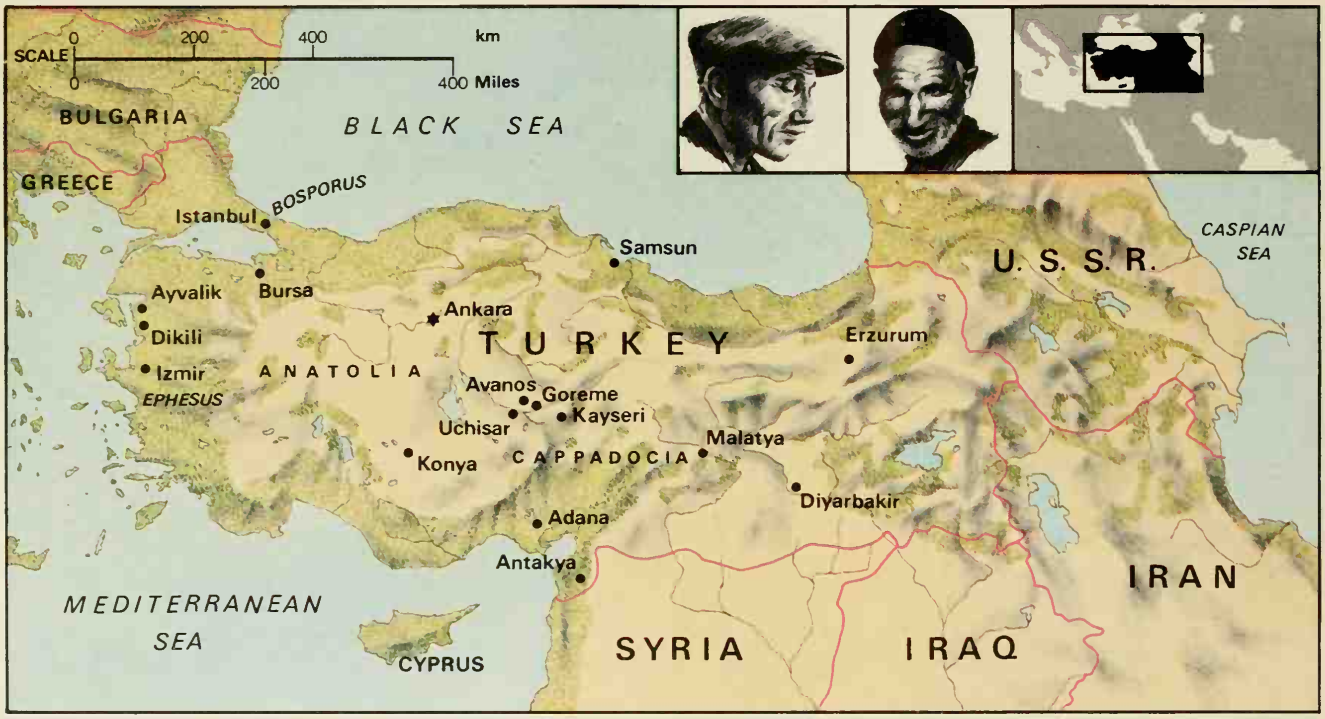
A Turkish village is such a jumble of streets and buildings that it looks as if it might have fallen out of the sky. It has however an order, an internal social order. The apparently haphazard clusters of buildings in fact represent different village quarters, each of which generally centers on a group of male kinsmen. The village is indeed a very special place for a Turk. Almost all his family live here, and it is by working cooperatively with his family that he obtains his livelihood. His wife probably comes from the same village.

There is no member of the village who does not belong to a household. The villagers describe a household as a group of people who eat from the same cooking pot. They are in fact a group of people who pool the fruits of their labor earned in the village or elsewhere, which revolves around a group of male kinsmen. Under the head of the household are all his married sons and their dependents, as well as his unmarried sons and daughters. When daughters marry they go to live with their husbands' families and become part of their households. The members of the household all live together under the same roof if possible. But if the household is very large they occupy several different houses preferably next door to each other. A villager explains it thus: 'We are three houses' he says, pointing at three houses in a street, 'but we are one house' – one economic unit, one household. The more successful and prosperous a household, the higher its position in the community. A man who marries a daughter of such a household will make a good match. Although the marriage will cost his family a great deal in bride-price, they will be more than compensated by the bride's family's contribution of clothing, furniture and other domestic items. The bridegroom will also be making an important alliance, likely to be very useful in his future dealings with the community.

A Turkish villager has not only great loyalty to his close kin, particularly the people who live in the same house, he also cares deeply about the welfare of the whole village. He is proud of the skill and enterprise of its menfolk. The virtues of the women of the village are jealously guarded and proclaimed in relation to other villages. Villagers who become prominent in national

Turkish villagers

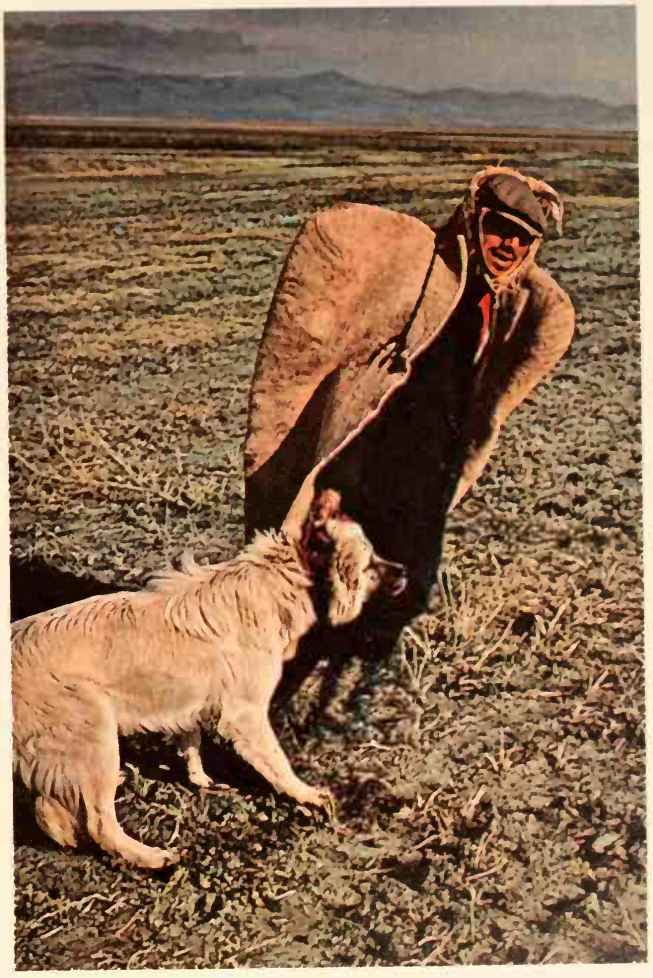
The empire of Genghis Khan, the mighty ruler, stretched across all of Central Asia from the Pacific Ocean to the Black Sea.



The land's limited resources are used carefully. Lacking wood here in the Am-Tahier pass camel dung is collected and dried in the sun for fuel.

Motor vehicles belong to the cities of Turkey. In rural areas the camel and the donkey are still a man's best friends.

In the fierce winds of the Plain of Anatolia, this man with his cloak, cap and muffler is better protected than his sheepdog



affairs are remembered and talked about with pride.

Over three quarters of the population of Turkey are farmers who live in village communities. Each village is governed by a headman who is traditionally a man of wealth and power, and a council of elders. The headman is nowadays democratically elected every two years and paid by the government, who makes him responsible for duties. He has to assess and collect taxes, maintain the public buildings such as the school, and forward to the appropriate authority the names of all the young men eligible for national service. His signature must countersign all applications by his villagers for grants of money from the agricultural bank or for the supply of Government seed. He must also report anything untoward, such as an outbreak of an epidemic, to the authorities. Although Turkish law today requires a council to be elected with the headman, this formally elected council rarely meets. When a matter of sufficient public interest does arise it is debated, discussed and resolved by an informal council composed of all the senior householders. The government also demands that each village appoint a watchman or a policeman. His duties are not onerous,

These Mawlai dervishes, known in the west as whirling dervishes, stimulate themselves to a state of ecstasy by their continual whirling movement.

however, as all household heads are responsible for the behavior of their subordinates. The villagers appoint a couple of watchmen for the growing crops and herdsmen for the sheep and goats. These servants of the community, unlike the salaried, state-appointed officials, are paid in kind by each household they serve.

A household breaks up only when the head of the household dies. Then his sons set up their own households, although for a short time a group of brothers may keep the old household organization together, particularly if they have unmarried sisters to support or other responsibilities which require a corporate financial involvement. The danger when households break up and re-form is that one man may be left with too little land to farm and the possibility of being unable to provide food and clothing for his family and not being able to meet his other commitments – money, for example, for a son's wedding.

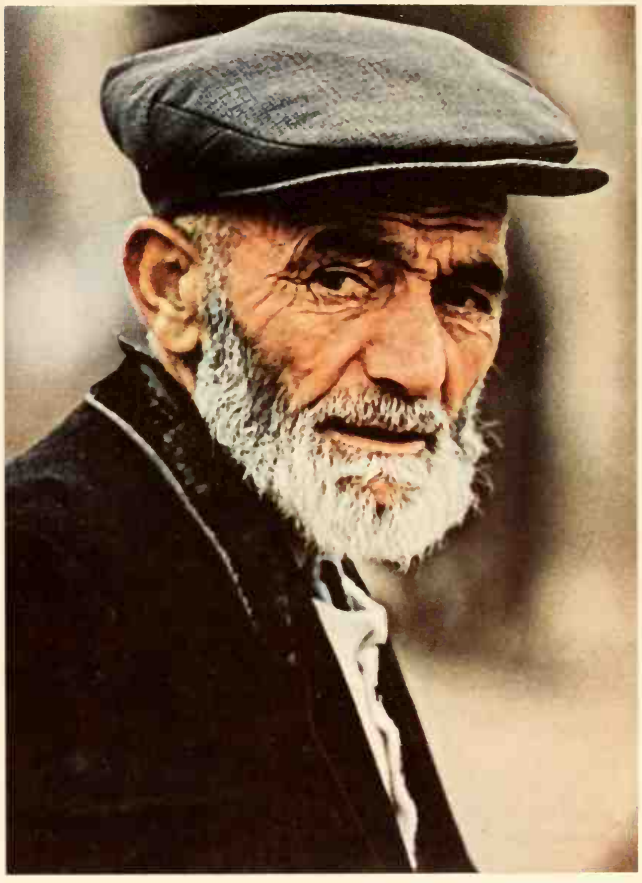
The increasing shortage of land is a problem which faces many villagers. Improved medical and maternity care in the rural areas result in people living longer. More people than ever before survive childbirth and the critical years of childhood. The population of the village grows and there comes a time when there is simply not enough land to go round. It is then that the men have to seek other work outside the village.

Fortunately this is relatively easy. The growing towns and cities are a ready market for labor from rural areas. Many farmers are also skilled builders and laborers and have no difficulty in finding jobs in the towns. The men are generally reluctant to leave their villages even temporarily, but they can do so happy in the knowledge that their small patches of land will be farmed by their brothers and their dependents will be well cared for. And with the money they earn the villagers buy manufactured goods and modern conveniences. The government is increasingly establishing factories and other enterprises in the rural areas to attract surplus labor from the villages. Better education today opens horizons for young people beyond the village and its traditional occupations. There are further possibilities of clerical, professional and administrative careers in the cities and towns. Nevertheless this is a particularly critical period for the village council whose responsibility it is to ensure that half the village arable land is left fallow each year to safeguard the harvests of the future, and that common village pasture is not encroached upon for crops.

Within the village, though, life continues much as it has for centuries. Only the seasons mark changes in village routine. In spring and summer the men tend their fields

Restaurant owners along the shore of the Bosphorus attract customers by providing belly-dancers for live entertainment.

The Turkish villager is a proud and hardy man. With all his kin around him he is part of a strong and reliable community.



(Bottom) Along the narrow cobbled streets of Ayvalik, on the Aegean coast, this old woman makes her way to the open-air market to buy fish.

which are usually some distance away from the village. The men go out with small animal teams and drag heavy wooden plows through the hard earth. Then they sow the seeds – mainly wheat and cereals – by hand. After that, apart perhaps from an early weeding and frequent prayers to Allah to send light rains to nurture the seed and lots of sunshine to ripen the grain, it is up to the watchmen to guard the crops and keep them safe from attacks by birds and animals. In small walled plots nearer home the villagers cultivate vines, fruit trees, melons and vegetables.

Every farmer concentrates on growing enough food for his household's needs. He makes sure that he stores some grain out of each harvest so that the family can have bread right through the winter and some seeds to plant in the following spring. If he has a surplus he sells it for cash in the market of the nearby town, or to the government warehouses.

The women spend their day cooking food for the household's daily needs. They also spend some time preparing food for storage for the winter. On baking days women sometimes make up to three months' supply of the flat hard bread made from wheat flour. Every day they milk the sheep and goats and every day they boil the milk immediately. They make yogurt by adding a little

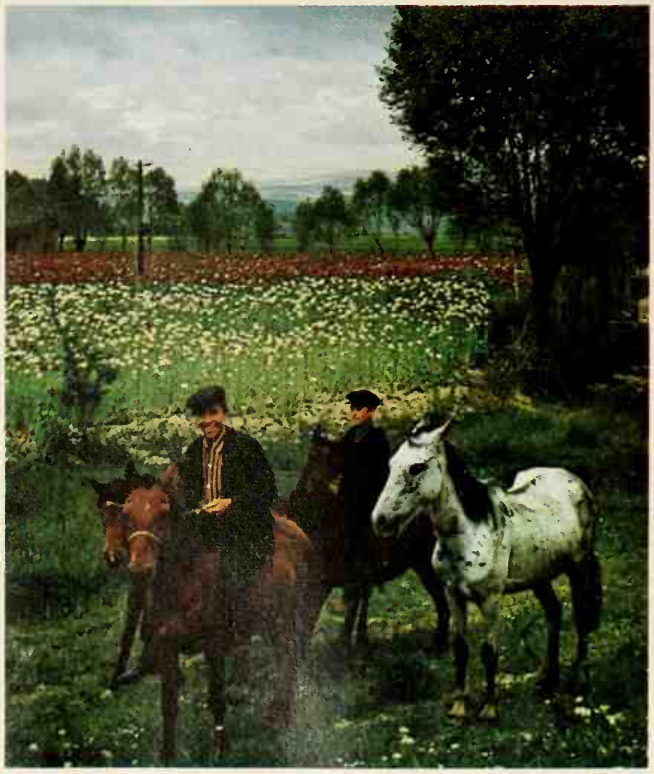
Turkish villagers

After World War I an exchange of populations took place between Turkey and Greece; all the Greeks then left this small fishing town of Ayvalik.

of the old yogurt to newly boiled milk. The family eat yogurt either by itself or mixed with water to make *ayran,* a drink not unlike buttermilk. The remainder of the milk they put in a scalded calf's or goat's skin. The pores in the skin allow the milk to evaporate slowly and keep cool. When it has turned sour they remove it and separate the whey from the coagulated milk. They store the coagulated cream which has turned into butter for cooking. As a break from preparing and cooking the food the women go to the village fountain several times a day to collect water or wash clothes, and to meet, to talk, and exchange news.

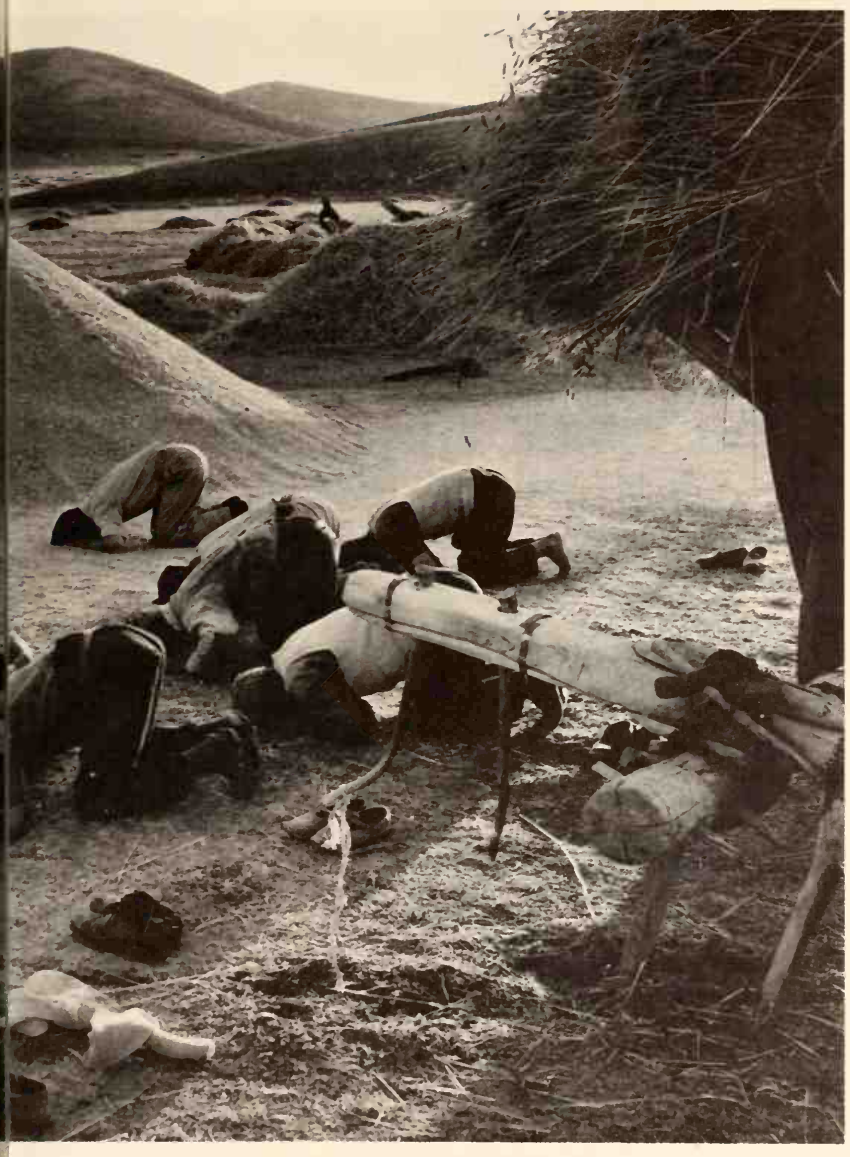
Harvest time is the busiest time. Then the village hums with activity. Everybody who can hold a sickle goes out in the fields to help cut the crops. The grain then has to be winnowed, threshed and finally taken to the miller to be ground. The people who have a surplus of grain or flour hurry off to the market to get there early to take advantage of the higher prices early in the season. Then, after the harvest is over, the villagers have time to relax. Little work can be done when winter and the snows arrive. Households sit and talk around a fire far into the night in the long winter evenings. Then the young people listen entranced to the old people who tell stories of great and stirring events of long ago.

Men and women lead divergent lives in the village.



Although the Turks despise their hippy western visitors, these fields of poppy are one of the world's main sources of raw opium.

As good Muslims, these Turks take time off from their work, remove their shoes, and bow down toward Mecca in worship of Allah.



The men work outside the home on the farm. The women's work is in the home itself, preparing and cooking food and bringing up the children. In a large household the wife of the household head organizes and supervises her sons' wives and her own daughters. Her daughters stay with her until they are about seventeen when they marry. Her sons, however, leave at a much earlier age to join their fathers working in the fields. Only at harvest time, when there is a great deal to be done, do men and women work side by side. Even at mealtimes the men eat separately. Only when their men have had their fill do the women and children eat.

The way the houses are designed reflects this division between the sexes. Most are single-storey, flat-roofed dwellings made out of local stone and wood with roofs of hard-packed earth, in each of which there is a kitchen-cum-living room where the women spend much of their day. At night this becomes the bedroom of the head of the household. The biggest and best furnished room in the house is the men's living room from which women are barred except when they are required to serve the men coffee and food. In the houses of rich villagers there is also a separate women's room, possibly a lavatory and bathroom and a number of small rooms for the younger members of the household.

Marriage, against this background of separation in men's and women's daily lives, is based on other considerations than romantic love between the couple. The family decides when a boy or girl is ready for marriage and generally it is the boy's family who approach the girl's family to make the necessary arrangements. Apart from settling the all-important question of the bride-wealth the families also have to ensure that the kinship relationship of the couple is not too close. A couple who share a grandfather in common, for example, would not be permitted to marry. Even a couple whose grandfathers were brothers would find it difficult to get permission. Once these questions are settled the engagement is announced and the girl's parents begin to buy clothing and furniture for the couple with the money they have obtained from the boy's parents. With the rest of the money they start to amass food in preparation for the engagement party. After the party the wedding is solemnized in the village mosque and the legal papers required by the government are signed.

The couple are now legally married in Turkish law, but for the villagers there is still one important event that must take place before the couple begin to live together. About a month after the wedding ceremony in the mosque the girl's parents, with the help of the boy's female relatives, make preparations for a large feast to which the entire village is invited. Only after several days of feasting, dancing and storytelling, during which nobody except the women does any work, is the marriage recognized by the village and the young couple begin their life together.

The wheat fields are some distance away from Turkish villages. Ox carts with wooden wheels are a common means of transport.

Troglodytes of Cappadocia

Turkey

The spikey coned hills of the Goreme Valley, in Central Turkey's Cappadocia make one of the world's weirdest landscapes. Travelers have often called it lunar, yet now we know that the surface of the moon is far more ordinary than the jagged horizons of these Cappadocian hills that look like jumbled rows of dunces' pointed hats. The rock pinnacles were formed because the soft rock was protected in places by hard rock, so that erosion by the battering winds and vicious winters of Cappadocia made tapering columns with protective rock as a cap – until the cap fell off leaving behind a rocky needle.

The region has another unusual aspect. In the modern Turkey of new schools and skyscrapers there are Cappadocians who have shunned the right-angles and cemented security of smart houses. Like rotten teeth, the cones are riddled from top to bottom with holes – hewn from the soft rock by the owners. Inside them live Turkey's troglodytes.

Cave-dwelling is certainly not new to Goreme. The present inhabitants tell you that the first cave-dweller was Hieron (Hieronymus), an early Christian martyr fleeing from persecution in 300 AD. He ran from his vineyard into a cave and hid there till lured out by a trick and betrayed. Around 400 AD came St Basil of Caesarea (modern Kayseri, a thriving town about fifty miles north-east of the Goreme area). He thought cave-dwelling was conducive to holy life, and encouraged Christians to burrow into the pinnacles and live there. In the 13th century there were 30,000 cave Christians, and over 300 chapels. Cave-dwelling declined together with Byzantium and since 1500 AD there have been few cave-dwellers – although a few stay on, and almost none of them Christian.

The caves that open out at the very foot of the cones are usually for cows. To reach a cave inhabited by people you climb up a ladder to the dark aperture often twelve feet above. A family may own a whole cone, with caves carved here and there. Some are connected by chimney-like shafts, but most are isolated in the rock-face. One or two grander ones have rock staircases leading up. Others have entrances so small that you have to squeeze into them. Some have spacious balconies.

There are Cappadocians who still spend their spare time hacking away at the rock to make themselves another room, but most of the dwellings were made centuries ago by the Christians. Many of them were evidently chapels. It is remarkable how well they have stood the test of time, although vandals and Muslim fanatics have obliterated many of the frescoes that covered the walls and ceilings, and so has the harsh Cappadocian weather.

The chapels are mostly the size of an ordinary western living room. St Basil discouraged his disciples from becoming hermits – he thought few men were psychologically fit to live quite alone. But he thought the large monasteries of the Sinai desert were too big for the Superior to look after all the priests properly. So the Christians of Cappadocia probably lived in tight-knit communities of five or six to a cave.

The caves were punctilious replicas of the chapels of Byzantium, reflecting the rigidity of that Christian organization. In defiance of architectural need, they all had pillars, and high domes. Today many of the pillars are smashed clean away under the capitals, leaving the tops of them and the arches hanging like oddly formed stalactites. Sometimes the brittle rock face has dropped away to expose the stern bearded prophets and saints to the open air and sunlight. But in most of the cave chapels there is a twilight effect. St George (born in Cappadocia) and his dragon lurk in shadows or in darkness. Only with a torch can you see the rich colors that sometimes still remain – tomato-reds, deep blues and mellow golds.

The caves that are lived in are well-carpeted. Home-woven rugs are hung on the walls and lie on the floors and divans, which are of wood (a rare commodity in Cappadocia) or carved out of the stone. There are plenty of cushions, and guests, with shoes off, can recline comfortably in the family's best cave. Niches and shelves are carved out of the walls.

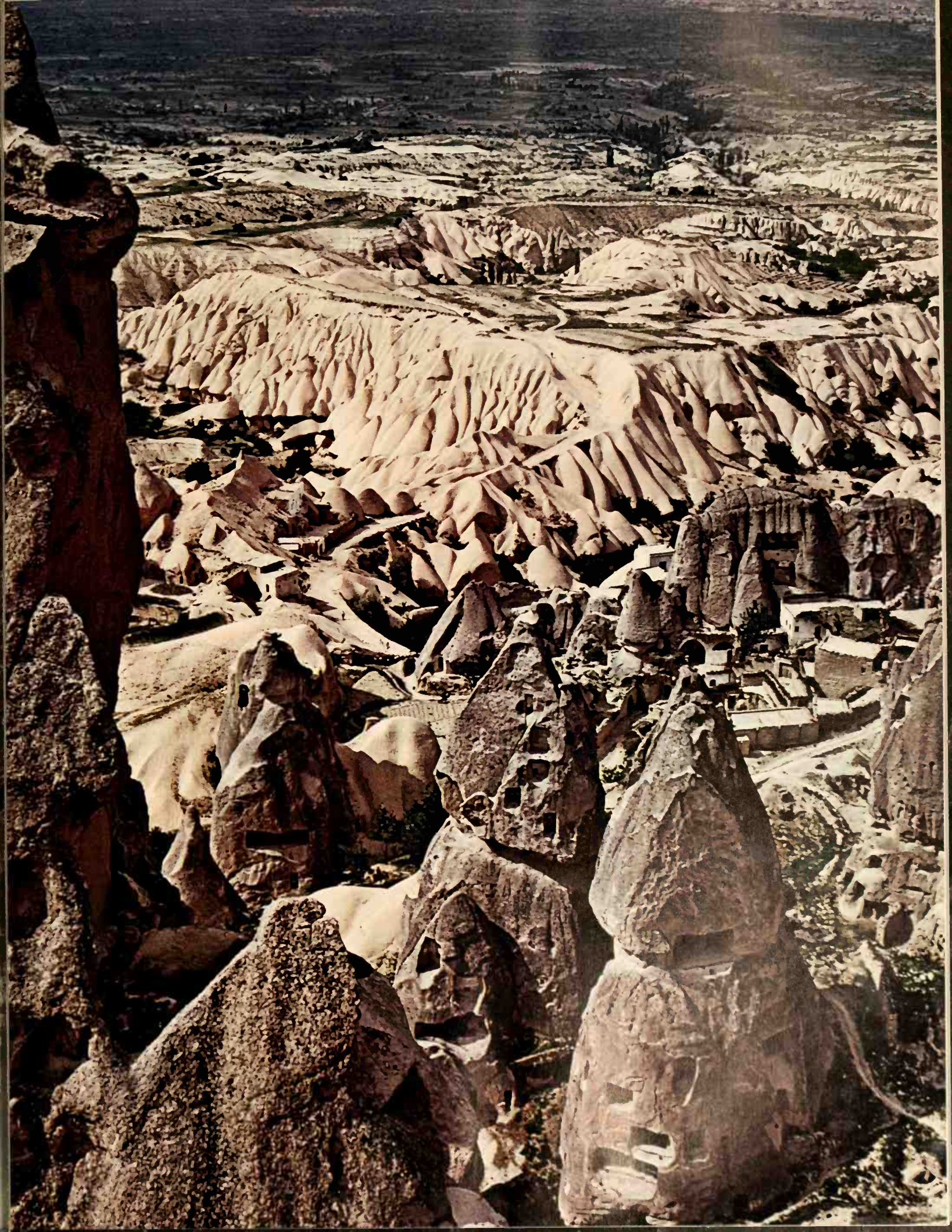
The kitchen and living room will often share a single, central chamber, but the sleeping quarters are not always connected. A family might have to descend a rickety ladder to the base of the cone and then climb another to a bedroom cave. Arched ceilings, raised altar and frescoes of the walls make some local farmers superstitious and they will speak of cave ghosts. Still more caves may intrude into the cone, above or below the main living places. Some are used as stables or storerooms, others are empty and dark and scattered with the débris of centuries.

At first, outsiders find it hard to see. The caves are smoky, and the eyes take time to adapt to the dim light and the sting of smoke. The cave-dwellers have drier abodes than their compatriots on the plains, and their homes never leak.

But in almost every way, the cave-dwellers' style of life is similar to other Cappadocian and Anatolian Turks. There are many families in the Goreme Valley who have some members living in caves, others in ordinary houses. Some houses huddle at the foot of a cone, and it is hard to see whether they merge with caves or not. Many people in Goreme have lived in both cave and house, and many own both types of dwelling – though it is true that of this category most people put their animals and stores in their caves, while they themselves live in the house.

Like all Cappadocians, the women and men wear baggy trousers, and the women have bright printed scarves with which they hide the lower part of their faces, leaving just the nose peeping out, when they see strangers. When it is cold, the people sometimes wrap rugs round themselves. (Goreme is famous for its weaving, and women spend much time making rugs, grainsacks and

Caves dug out of the eroded rock cones in Turkey's Goreme valley have been inhabited since paleolithic times.



Troglodytes of Cappadocia Turkey

Early Christians made the Cappadocian caves into chapels and monasteries. Today walls can still be seen covered with fading Byzantine paintings.

saddlebags on their upright looms.)

Work is mostly agricultural. People rise at dawn and go off in creaking carts, with solid wood wheels, pulled by donkeys. Only on Friday do they rest. But there are long periods, especially in winter, when there is not much to do. The idea of day-to-day work is horrific. Nevertheless, the soil is poor, and so are the people. When there is an opportunity for work, it is grabbed. Many go off as migrant labor to the big towns. The wheat yield is low, and few men are rich. Cows and chickens add to the diet of cereals.

But there is fruit, too – dried apricots, raisins, grape-jam, apples. Everyone eats yogurt. And they make delicious mint salads. Shish kebab is the staple meat dish – sheep brains are a luxury. There is good white wine, and you can taste it before buying. Vodka, brandy and raki (an aniseed-flavored spirit) cheer you up in winter.

Troglodytes have the same village system as the people on the plains. They have common grazing lands, small (often fragmented) smallholdings of their own, and an elected headman. Some men own several caves, even several cones, and rent them out to others; but generally there are no great differences of wealth.

The family is the closest unit. Boys are almost all married between the ages of 16 and 22, girls between 14 and 18. But even after marriage, sons stay in the father's household till the father dies. Though the family is close-knit, fathers and sons often have bitter quarrels.

The troglodytes follow the same Muslim code as other Turks. To call a man *gavur* – infidel – is the worst abuse. Since the time of Kemal Ataturk's assault against religion, Mohammedanism has lost much of its fervor, but in Goreme the people fear the cave spirits as well as Allah. There is often hushed talk of wandering cave ghosts, and the wierd cones are sometimes called fairy chimneys.

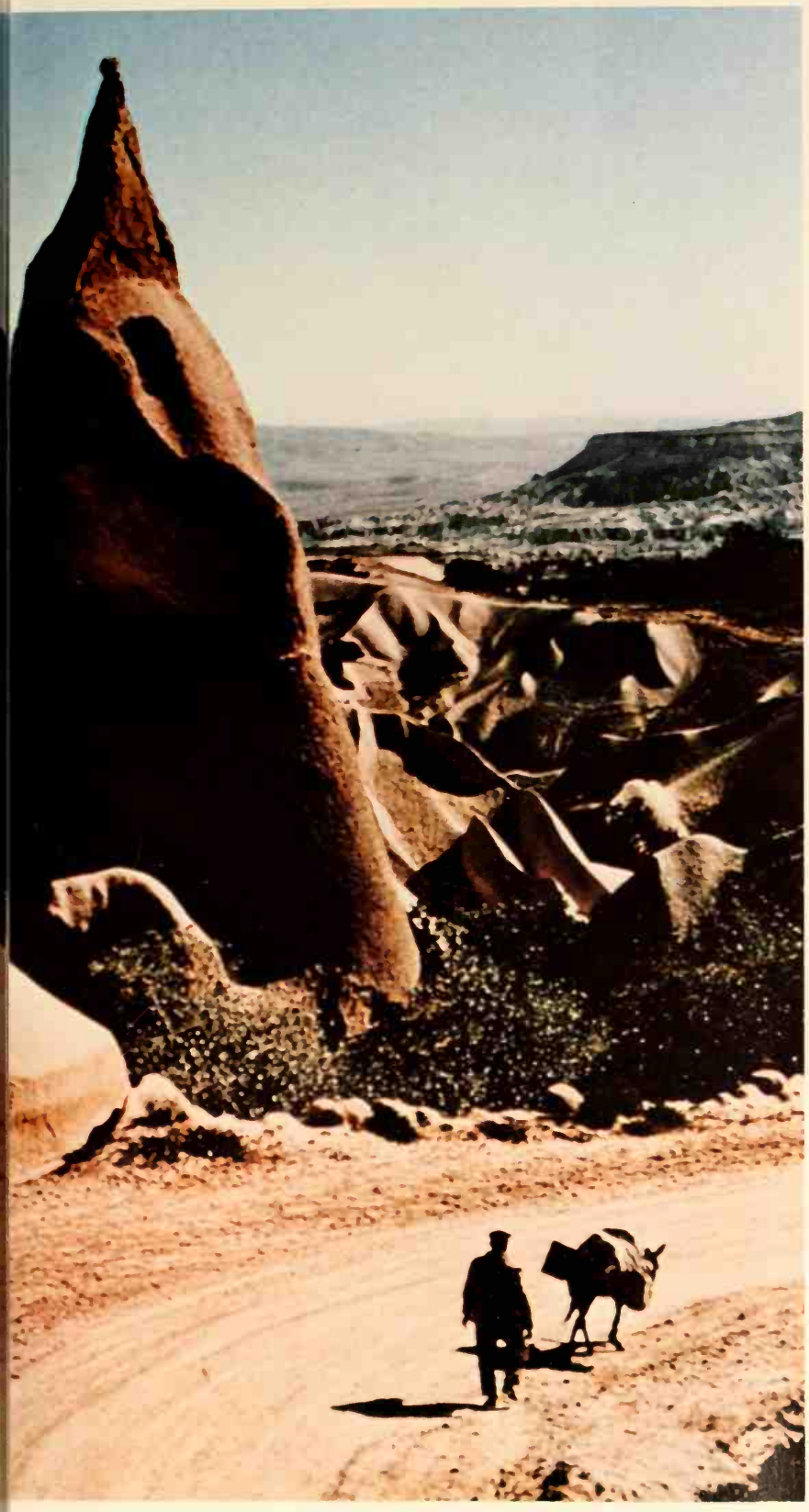
As in the rest of Turkey, there is a conflict in the people's (especially the men's) behavior. On the one hand there is the need for 'morality' – you are respected if you know the Koran, are wise, gentle, kind and dutiful towards the *hoca* who leads the Friday prayers. On the other hand, 'honor' must be kept at all costs. It would be laudable to knife a man for soliciting your daughter. Violence is common, though strangers are treated with usual Turkish courtesy.

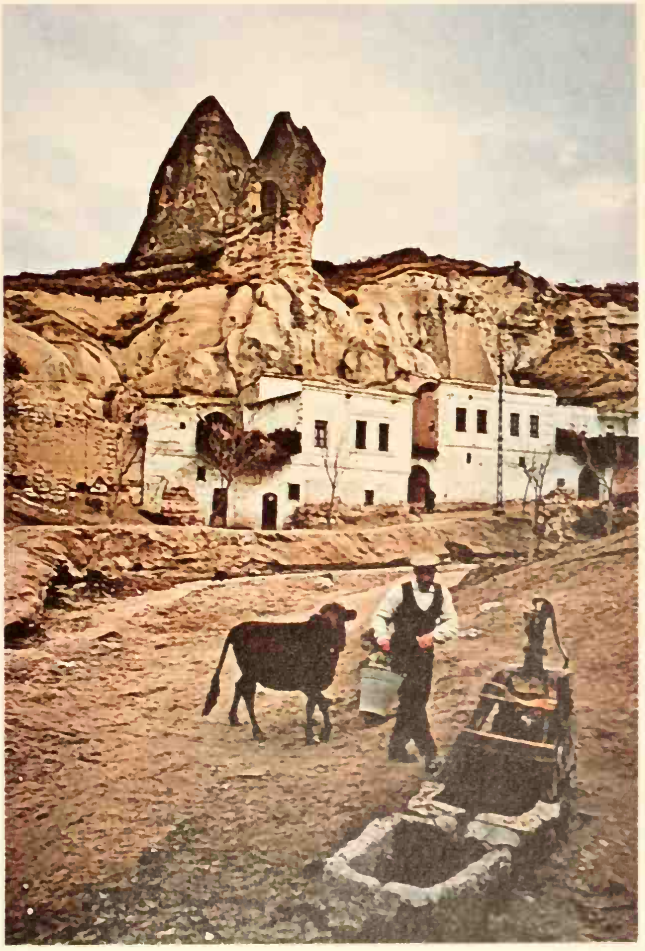
All in all, Turkish troglodytes differ little from their compatriots on the plains of Anatolia or Cappadocia. There are many more uninhabited caves than inhabited ones. But if you explore the cones and are lucky enough to come across a deserted old chapel, complete with painted prophets and St George, you do not have to be a romantic to think yourself back into the days of the caves' founders, who ate so little and prayed so much. And you feel that the spirits of those early Christians and their Byzantine successors are the true occupants.

Muslims live in the caves today. Even so, the people fear wandering cave ghosts and the cones are sometimes called fairy chimneys.

The Cappadocian soil is poor and so are the people. If there is a chance of work in the towns, the young men leave the valley.

(Bottom) Some people live in houses huddled at the base of the cones. They keep their livestock and stores in the caves at the back.





Kurds
Syria, Turkey, Russia, Iran and Iraq

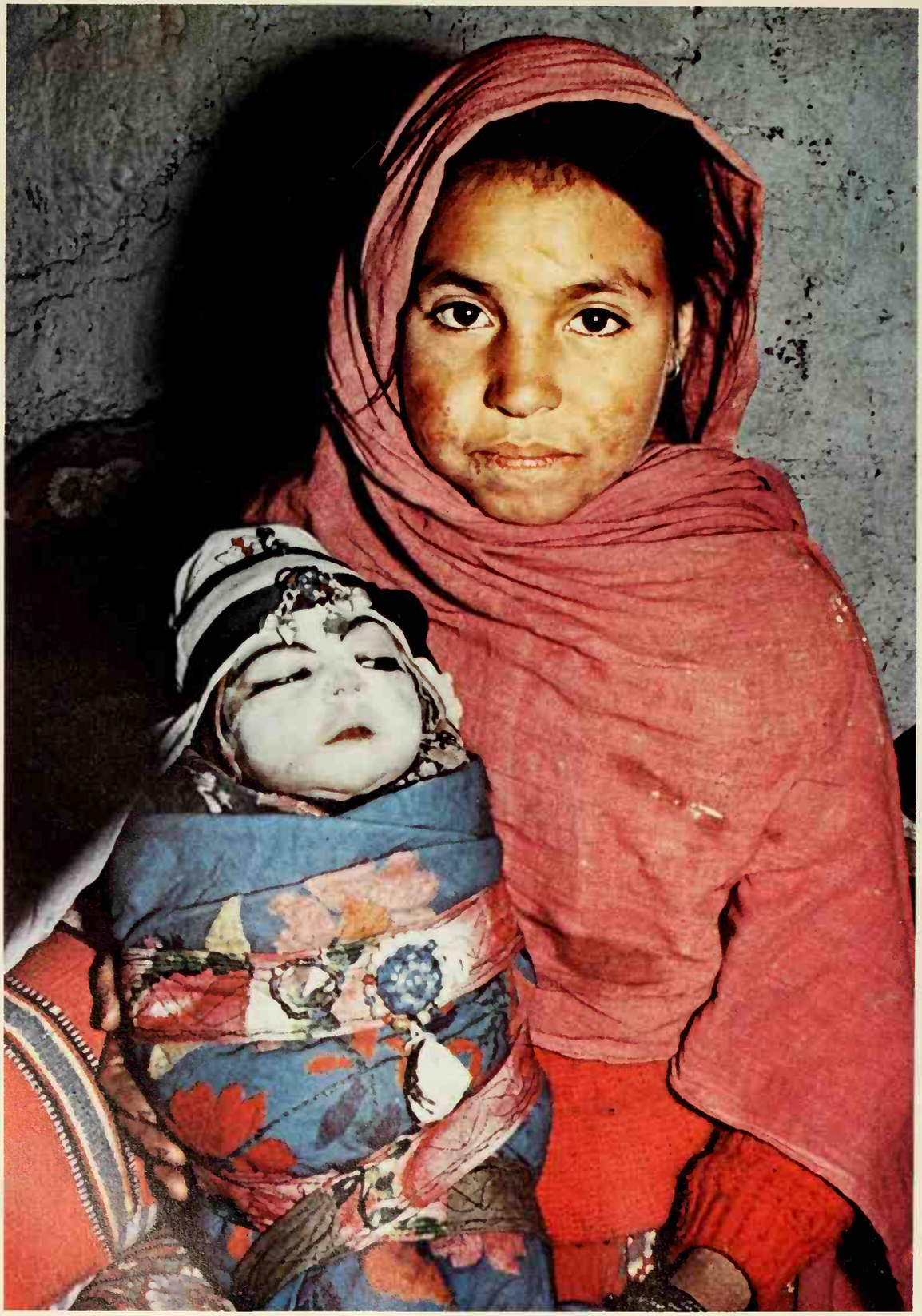
The Kurds have a reputation in literature as fierce, predatory mountain bandits. They admire courage and the qualities of leadership. Their ferocious reputation has probably arisen because not only have they always had to defend themselves from their neighbors but they are also divided from each other into isolated and opposing communities.

The Kurds are possibly Kardukai, descendants of the peoples who harried Xenophon's retreat in 400 BC. There are references to Kurds dating back to the Sumerian and Assyrian periods. Their history has been one of constant conquest and subjugation by others: by the Arabs in the 7th century, by the Mongols and Seljuks in the 11th century and by the Turks until the collapse of the Ottoman empire. Then, after World War I, their lands were divided between Syria, Turkey, Iran and Iraq. Ever since the Kurds' harsh, mountainous territories were first called Kurdistan in the 12th century they have persistently struggled for self-determination.

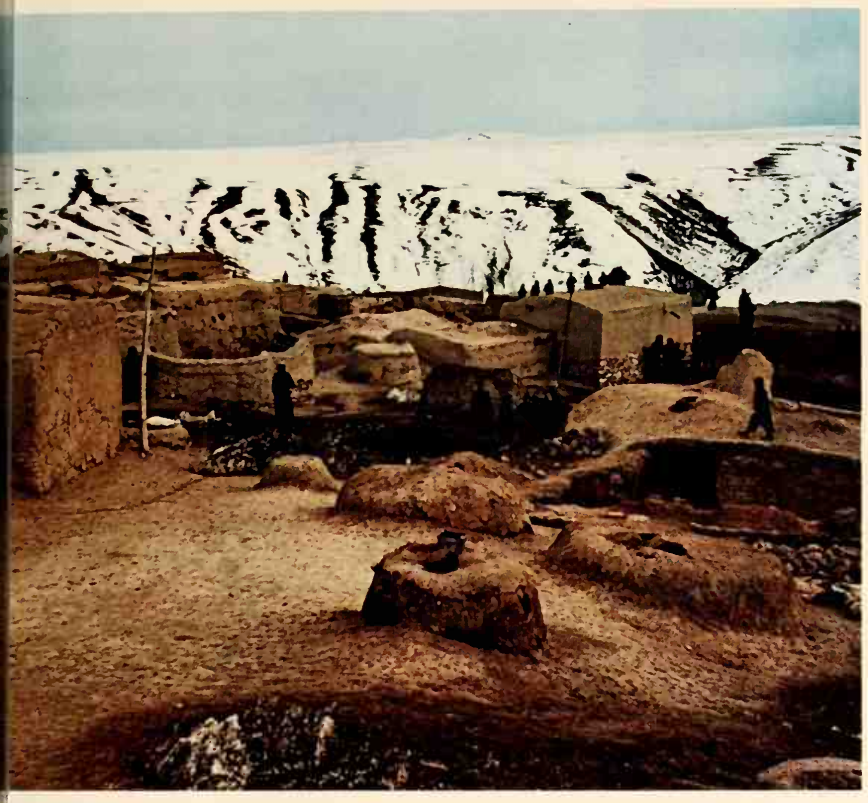
Kurdistan today is divided between five national

Since the 12th century the Kurds have been bravely fighting for autonomy in their mountain fastnesses — so far without success

Kurdish womenfolk, unlike most of their neighbors, have never worn the veil. Some have even been rulers. Yet they still care for the children.



The mountain terrain is so harsh that, in winter, villages can only be reached by mules, horses or on foot.



Women return from helping the men in the fields on a summer's evening. Only at the busiest times of the year do they work in the fields.

boundaries: Syria, Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Russia. And all the Kurds are minority peoples under these national governments. Despite this and contact with Arabs, Turks, Russians and Persians, they have maintained their Kurdish identity. They have a strong sense of national self-awareness, and cultural and linguistic unity. Central governments have tended to neglect their interests. This, coupled with their aspirations for autonomy, has caused them to rise up in arms several times in the 20th century. There were Kurdish revolts in Turkey in 1925, 1930 and 1937; there was the revolt of Simko in Iran after World War I and another after the proclamation of the Mahabad republic in 1946; 1918, 1924, 1943 and 1961 saw revolts in Iraq. But on each occasion they have failed to achieve any self-determination. Only in Russia are the Kurds not identified with the Kurdish desire for autonomy – at least, not overtly so.

There are an estimated five to six million Kurds, but Kurdish sources put the figure at 10 to 12 million. They have dark brown hair, brown eyes, an olive complexion and medium stature although a few have fair hair, blue eyes and light skins. They speak Indo-European languages with three dialects. Northern Kurds speak Zaza. Central Kurds speak Kermanji, considered the literary and semi-official language. The southern Kurds speak Gourani. Some Kurds, mainly men, speak Arabic, Turkish or Persian as second languages. Only in Iraq is Kurdish used as a medium of instruction in schools in Kurdish areas. Kurdish is also taught and studied at some universities.

In Syria they live in the Jezira. In Turkey they live along the Turco-Iranian border, and around Bitlis, Erzinjan, Diyarbakr, Erzurum and on the western slopes of Ararat. In Russia they live mainly in Soviet Armenia. In Iran they live mainly in Kurdistan and Kermanshah provinces, and in the southern part of Azerbaijan and the mountainous part of Urmia, Khoi, the southern slopes of Ararat and the Pushti Kuh mountains. In Iraq they occupy the northeastern part of the country and some live in towns in southeastern and central Iraq where they are known as *Failiya*.

Most of Kurdistan is mountainous with the Zagros mountains as its backbone. These range from 3,000 to 17,000 feet and extend from the Euphrates in northern Syria and Turkey to Kermanshah in Iran. The climate is rigorous: winter is both bitterly cold and wet for it coincides with the rainy season from November to April. Summer is very hot, especially in valleys and plains.

In the valleys, plains and foothills farming is the basis of Kurdish life. There are also semi-nomadic Kurdish shepherds who live in low-lying villages in winter and move to mountain grazing grounds in summer. The true nomads live in the mountains. They traditionally seek water and pasture within their tribal territories and across national boundaries. Boundaries have latterly made it difficult to follow their transhumant cycle.

Girls are usually married at about 15, often to their paternal cousins. Their bridewealth is displayed on the front of their dresses.

The farmers cultivate tobacco, wheat and barley as their main crops. They sometimes cultivate rice which needs irrigation but it is a favored food; cultivating it has prestige value. They also grow sugar beet, cotton and vines. Their apple, pear, plum, peach, apricot, fig and melon orchards abound in the plains around villages near the rivers. Whole villages tend to specialize in one particular crop. Tobacco, rice, fruit and vegetable plots are permanently sited in relation to the lay-out of the irrigation system. The rivers and mountain streams have not yet been fully exploited, although water power is used to work the flour mills in the larger villages. Cultivation largely depends on rain. To preserve the fertility of the soil fields are left fallow in alternate years according to a rotation system. Fallow land can be used for vegetable crops.

Men work in the fields. Women look after the animals and do the milking as well as domestic duties. In the busy season they also help with the grain harvest and tobacco-picking. Crafts, like metal-working, pottery, carpentry and rug-weaving supply many local needs.

The semi-nomadic population are stock-breeders, especially of goats and sheep which provide them with meat, milk, cheese, butter, skin, wool and goat hair, all of which they either use locally or trade. Among the nomads land is owned collectively by the whole group. But in rural farming areas it is either divided into plots and individually owned or, more usually, belongs to wealthy absentee landlords. A feudal relationship has emerged between landlord and tenant. The crop is usually shared equally between the two but in return for his share the landlord may render certain services to his tenant like providing credit, seeds or the wherewithal for plowing. In theory a landlord can evict a tenant but in practice he rarely does in case he initiates a conflict which could disrupt the village.

Apart from the few who live and work in towns, the settled and semi-nomadic Kurds in the plains and foothills live in small permanent villages. These vary in size and are generally larger in the plains than on the mountain slopes because better water supplies in the plains make it possible to cultivate a larger area. On the mountain slopes a typical peasant house is a single rectangular room, built of mud or stone with a flat roof. Houses are usually built one above the other, so that the roof of one house forms the terrace in front of the house above. In the plains and foothills mud huts often replace stone houses. Some inhabitants of the villages occupied by the semi-nomads accompany their flocks on seasonal migrations. Whereas the nomadic population live in tents

of goat hair, the semi-nomads often build wattle huts.

Kurds, like their neighbors, reckon descent in the male line – which determines succession to positions of authority as well as governing the inheritance of property. The preferred marriage partner is a cousin, especially a father's brother's daughter, that is a cousin on the father's side, because property inherited by the couple will be kept within the family and the solidarity of the lineage will be maintained. Sometimes two men may exchange their sisters in marriage. In this case no bride-wealth – nowadays paid in money to the bride's family – is given. After marriage the bridegroom takes the bride to live with his own group. Broadly speaking, commoners tend to marry within the same kinship group whereas landlords marry outside. Commoners usually have one wife but landlords can afford more than one. By having several wives they gain prestige and political alliances.

The wealthy landlords are known as *aghas* or *begs* and they are the political leaders. The commoners are the farmers and herdsmen. The title *agha* implies landlordship but it is extended as a courtesy title to a landlord's children and brothers. Succession to political leadership is either hereditary, by election or by nomination of the government. Before central authority was established over the Kurds the *aghas* had administrative and judicial powers. Now their power is decreasing with the creation of an educated class and because of the social and economic changes that have occurred among the Kurds. The *aghas* are still important as mediators and as arbitrators in disputes. Their prestige is indicated by their age, birth, experience, wealth, bravery and their exhibition of hospitality. Their position is based not only on the amount of land they own but also on kinship, political support and showing hospitality. They keep guest houses for strangers who happen to pass by and are esteemed according to their hospitality. If the guest is an important person he is expected to present gifts (tea, sugar, coffee or matches) to the *agha*, but a poor person is not expected to.

The largest political unit is the *ashirat*, a confederation of tribes. Each *ashirat* is divided into a number of *tiras*, the primary political and landowning units whose members trace descent from a common male ancestor. Members of a *tira* are dispersed through the villages or camping sites. In each *tira* are a number of *khels*, or collections of households living as a village or camping together. A household is an independent economic unit, consisting of husband and wife, or wives, and children and perhaps some dependants. Each *ashirat*, *tira* and *khel* is headed by a *beg* or *agha*. Among the sedentary Kurds an *agha* may own more than one village in which case he appoints deputies.

The village of sedentary Kurds is a territorial unit whose members may belong to different kinship groups. In this case the commoners belong to a kinship group other than that of their *agha* from whom they lease land and under whose authority they come. But among nomadic Kurds the kinship group corresponds to the territorial group and the *agha* belongs to the same kinship group as his followers. Instead of the *agha* owning the land he organizes the seasonal migrations and has rights to specific pastures and camping sites. His power is however subject to manipulation and competition, whereas the *agha's* position is unchallenged.

Sometimes a woman becomes the head of a political unit but usually as regent. Among leading families women play an important role in politics. For example, Adila Khanum, on the death of her husband, became the leader of the Jaf confederacy in Iraq about the time of World War I.

Since central authority has been established there are no longer the organized raids of the past. However there are minor blood feuds among all Kurds. They may arise from disputes over water and grazing rights, especially in times of scarcity, and they may lead to murder. Or they may be started by insult or adultery. Not only are individuals involved, but also their families to whom they turn for support. In these cases the *aghas*, helped by the elders, organize a settlement by which blood-money is calculated and often paid in kind. The amount depends

The nomadic Kurds keep flocks of goats and sheep whose fleeces can be sold in the towns besides being used for their own clothes.

(Top) Like most of the highland west Asians, the Kurds weave their own cloth on hand-made looms, using homespun yarn.

on the severity of the injury and the status of the injured. A girl may be given in marriage in payment of blood-money. Sometimes feuds between *aghas* may last for generations.

The Kurds, like the Arabs, Turks and Persians are Muslim; most are Sunni Muslim of the Shafi'i rite. But some of those who live in Kermanshah in Iran and in south-eastern and central Iraq are Shi'ites. Others are Ali Ilahis, members of a sect derived from Shi'a extremism who believe in the deification of Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law. They live mainly in Iran. There are also Yezidis, in northern Iraq who regard the devil, represented by the peacock, as the creative agent of the Supreme God. They practise baptism and circumcision. There are two Sufi religious brotherhoods, the Qadiriya and the Naqshabandiya which are prominent in the rural areas and particularly among the poorer people.

Shaikhs, sayyids and *mullahs* are the three religious functionaries. The *shaikhs* claim descent from the Prophet and are the leaders of the religious brotherhoods. The *sayyids,* distinguished by their green turbans, also claim descent from the Prophet. They are traveling holy men who sell various charms for good luck or against sickness. Invariably a village has a *mullah* who teaches young children, and officiates at weddings, naming ceremonies and funerals. These priests supplement their livelihood by contributions in kind from landlords and peasants. The status of any priest depends on personal qualities, religious learning and piety and on his relationship with political leaders and wealthy landlords. A political leader or a wealthy landlord may favor a priest and in his turn relies on him for support.

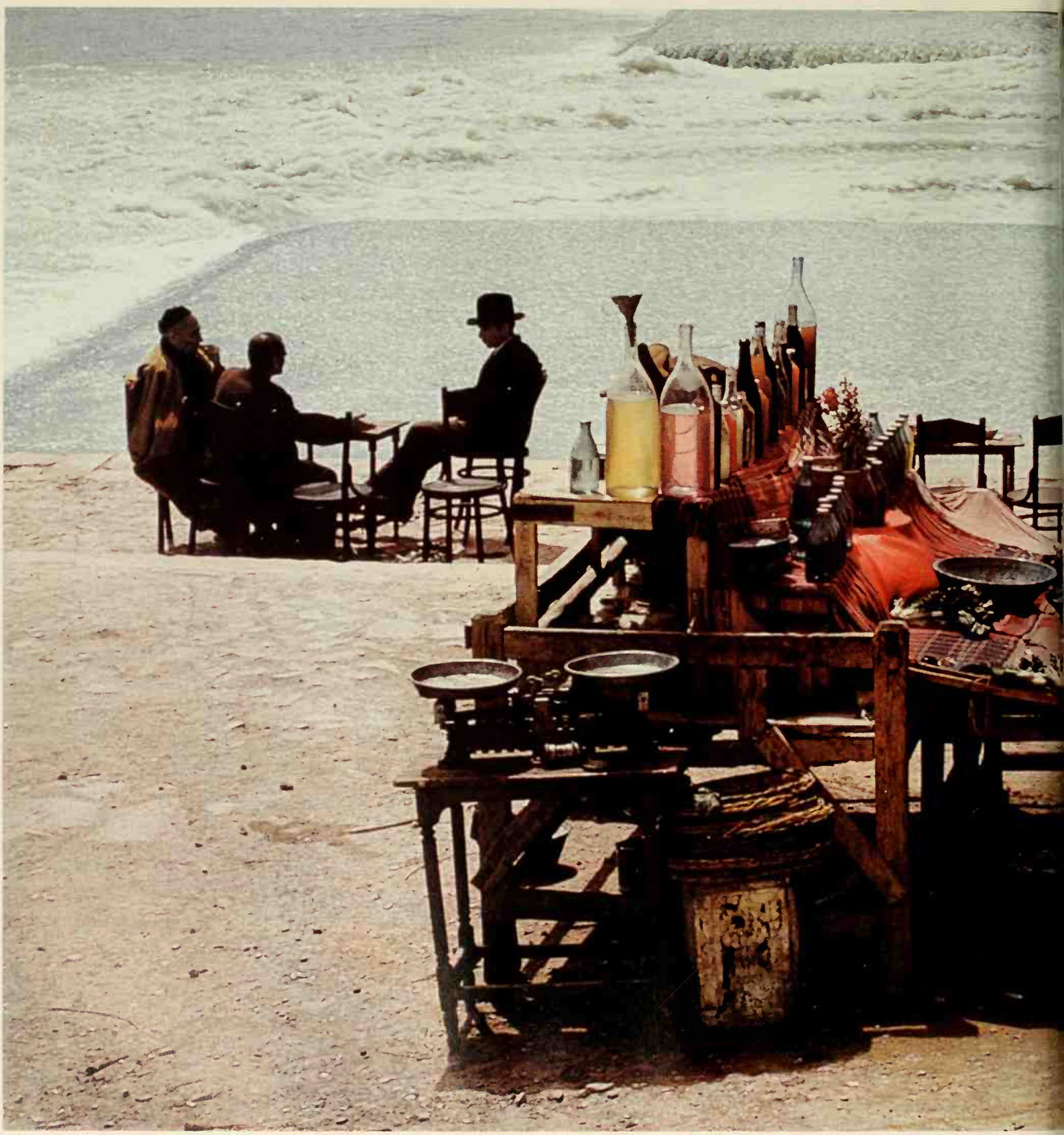
Kurds of whatever social order are on certain occasions brought together in communal ceremonies. There are two major religious feasts and also the celebrations of the Prophet's birthday. These bring together the members of Kurdish society and cut across considerations of hierarchy in political and economic spheres. Relatives and friends come together at other times such as child naming ceremonies, circumcisions, weddings and funerals. The amount of hospitality a man displays on these occasions is a measure of his prestige. Since a person improves his status through lavish hospitality, there is a lot of rivalry in feasting and in the amount of hospitality a man can offer.

Before eating this goat the villagers must bleed it. Meat to eat is rare and many Kurds are seriously undernourished.

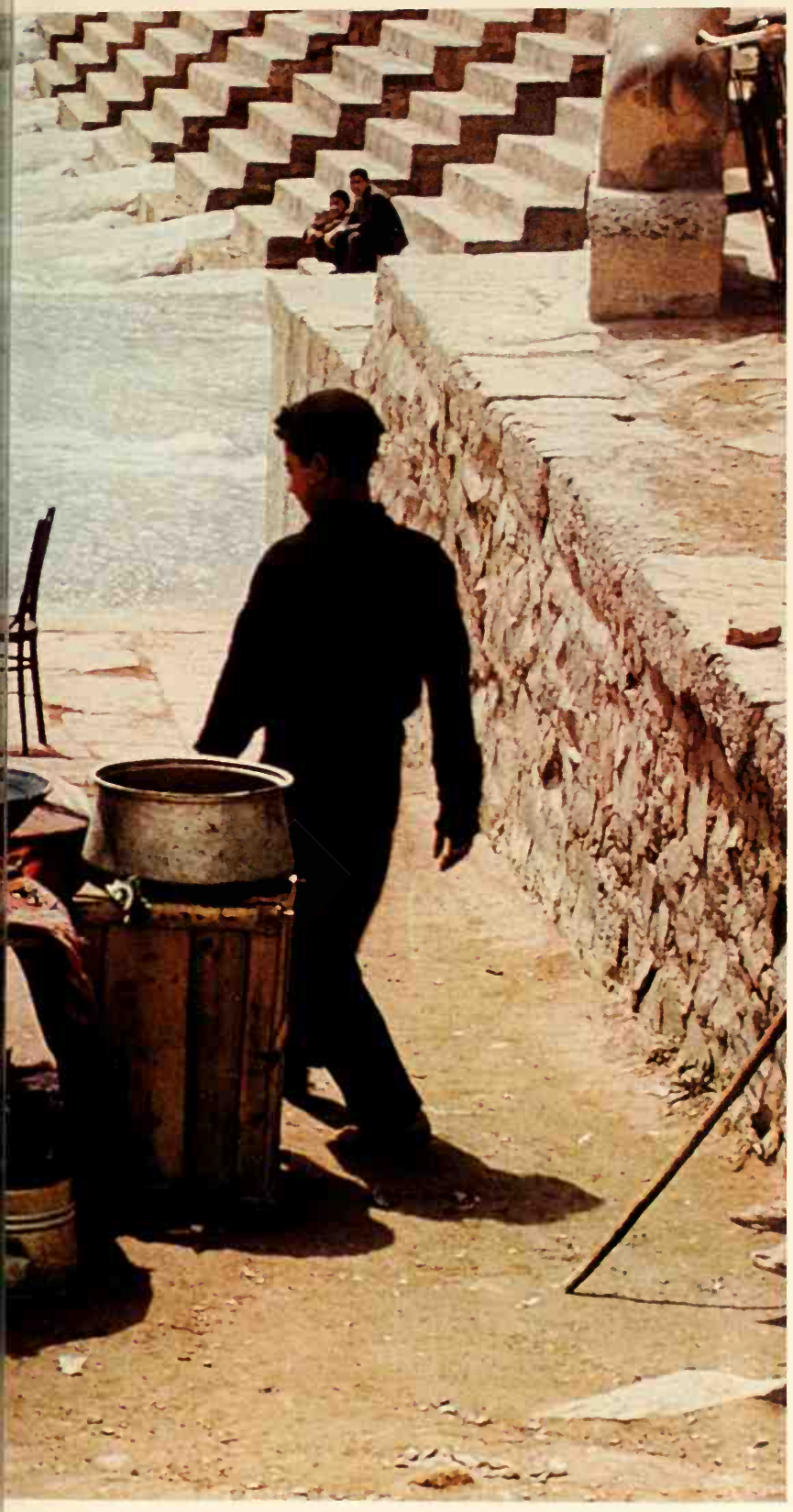
The Kurds are thought to be descendants of the Medes of the Assyrian period. They expect from their men courage and leadership.

A village 'grows' as a single complex against the hillside, so that the roof of one house might be the terrace of the one above.

Iranians



In the squares of glittering Istahan, whose history dates from the growth of Persia 2,700 years ago, today's Iranians sip cordials of mango and grape.

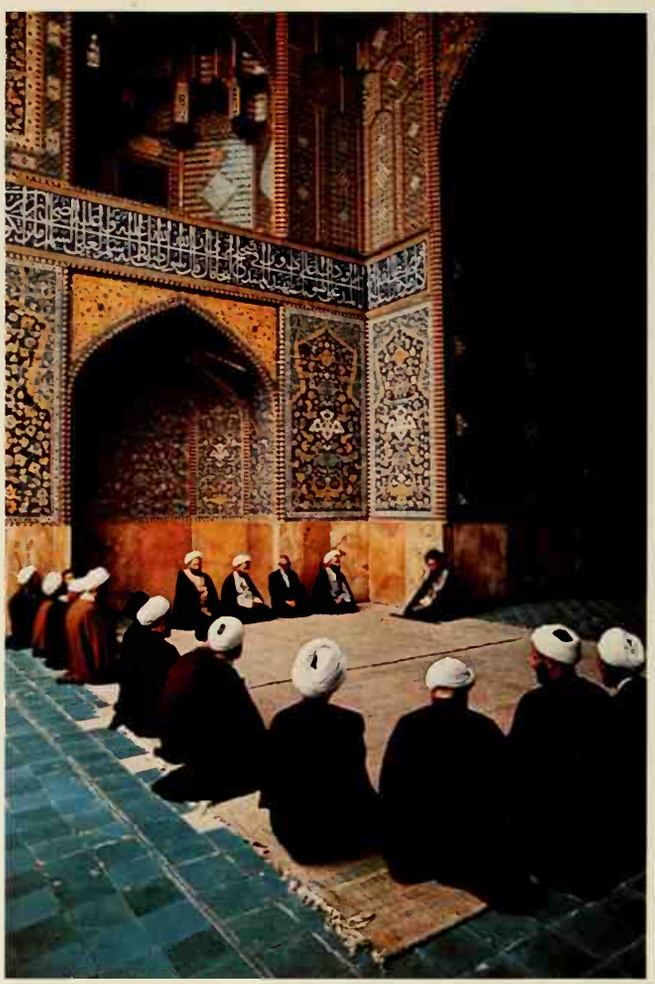


Iran has long been the meeting place for east and west. Along a narrow fertile strip between the mountains of the north and the salt deserts of the south have poured countless hordes of migratory tribes and marauding bands. Each successive wave has first plundered and ravaged the countryside, then settled down and finally been assimilated by a people long accustomed to invasion. The villages of Iran are thus made up of many different cultural and racial groups: Mongols left behind from Genghis Khan's conquering armies; Turkomen who have more in common with the peoples of the eastern steppes than with the inhabitants of modern Turkey; Arabs along the Gulf; Kurd on the border with Iraq and Baluchi in the south-east near Pakistan. But with all these differences of history and culture Iran does not lack distinctive features of its own. There is a continuity

Like other eastern cities, Iran's can be deceptive – a warren of passages and high walls hiding spacious and leafy inner courtyards and elegant homes.

(Bottom) The Iranians may have been the world's first metalworkers. In the south of Shiraz, skill in brass, copper, silver and jewelry lives on.

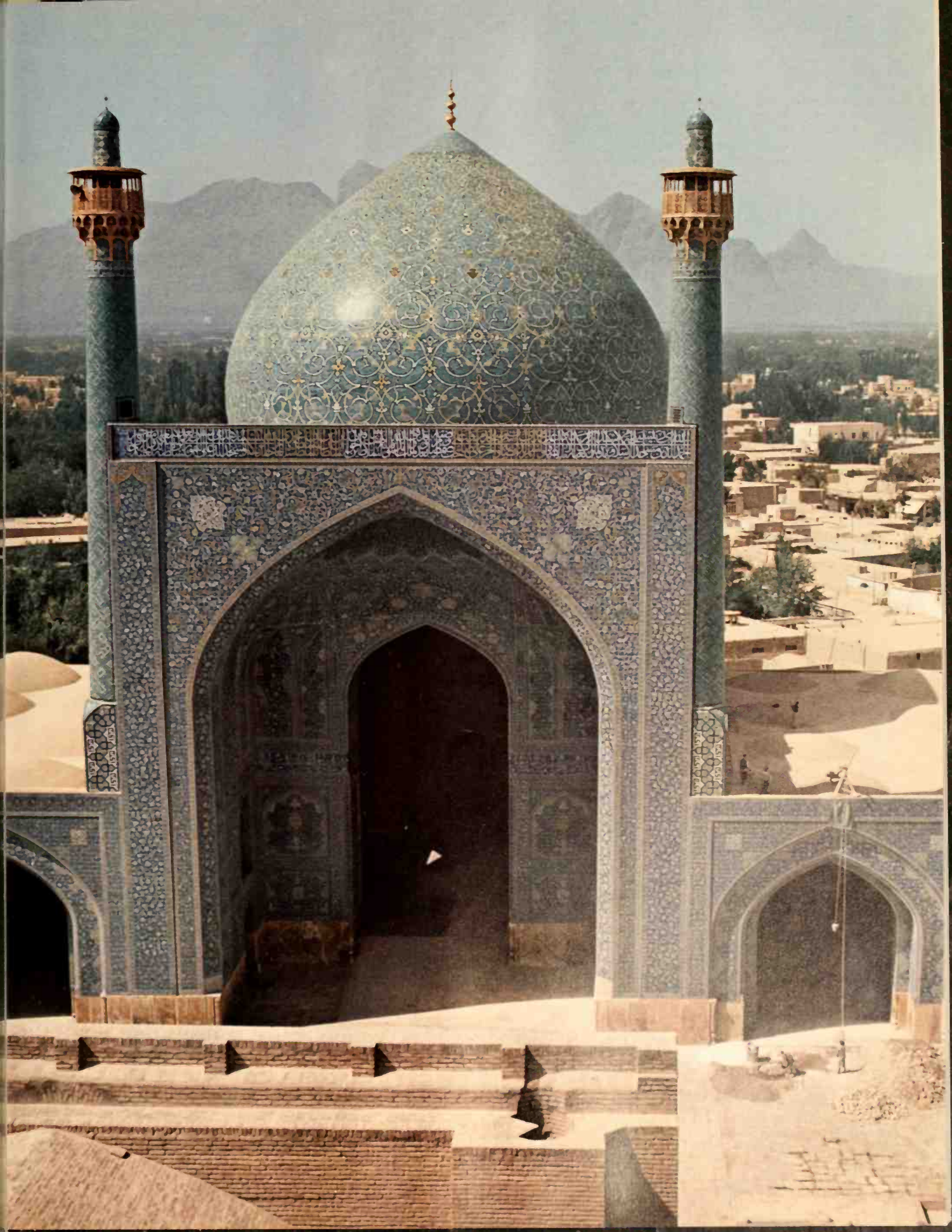
These traditionally clad and tarbushed men, reclining on mats in the Madrassah mosque in Isfahan are studying to be teachers of Islam.



in religion, literature and way of life that overcomes these differences.

Whatever his origin the Iranian villager traditionally lives in a small cluster of mud houses in the plains. He depends on an uncertain water supply for a meager existence. He grows cereal crops and grain in semi-desert land and keeps a precarious balance on the one hand with passing nomadic groups and on the other with the rich owner of the land he works. Many villages near the vast deserts of the south and east remain dry for years although the average annual rainfall in Iran is 12 inches. For part of the year streams flow from the mountains bearing melted snow to the edges of the desert where they sink without trace. Most villages have grown up around one such stream. Otherwise the villager gets his water from *qanat*, deep underground channels, which Iranians have been constructing for centuries. *Qanat* tap the moisture at the foot of the hills and carry it down a gentle slope below ground to near the village, where it comes out into the open. Blind white fish live in these channels. The builders dig a vertical shaft every so often along each *qanat*. On the surface these shaft heads appear as

(Right) Shah Abbas II made Isfahan his capital in the 17th century, lavishing all the brilliance of Persian design on the Shah mosque.



The finest turquoises in the world have been mined in Persia for over 800 years. Now the craftsman uses machines to grind and polish the stones.

lines of mounds, looming over flat plains like strange lunar craters and pointing the way to the village that awaits the *qanat's* supply of cold, fresh water.

The village, in the past, was defended against marauders by high mud walls with corner towers and a single gateway. Families lived in narrow rooms in the outer wall leaving central area clear for livestock. The walls, however, were easily broken down. And a determined invader could merely sit at the mouth of the *qanat* which was often some distance from the village, and cut off the water supply. Then the main defense lay in negotiation, isolation or, in the long term, assimilation. Today most villages have spread both inwards and outwards from the defensive wall, which remains only as a reminder of a more turbulent past. The village is a network of narrow lanes between high mud walls with low doorways which occasionally open out into courtyards. Each courtyard is the home of a family. For much of the year the villagers live outdoors and the courtyard is a bustling center for cooking, washing, talking and playing. On one side the animals are stabled – usually a donkey for carrying burdens, a cow for work or for meat and some sheep and goats for their meat and milk products. The women make yogurt (*marst*), sharp cheese and *dugh*, a refreshing drink from goats' milk, to supplement the crops of the field. Chickens roam free, dropping their eggs on the baked earth where they are gathered by the children.

The male head of the family is a small king. The family is a self-sufficient unit which provides its members with a place in the economic and social life of the wider social unit, the village. A husband and his wife or wives live with their children and aged parents, unmarried brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles in a small complex of rooms where everything is shared. Although civil law now forbids polygyny, a man may, by Muslim law, take four wives, and it is still a sign of wealth and status in many villages. The wives live in separate rooms in the same courtyard. They often treat each other like sisters.

Children help to do adult work from an early age. The boys help their fathers in the fields and tend livestock in the grazing land beyond. And girls learn to wash, cook and sew. At the end of a long day in the fields the men return to their respective courtyards and, after washing from a jug poured by one of the children, they go to sit in the main room. This room is always kept clean and tidy. Rugs cover the floor which has been carefully swept with twigs. The mattresses and quilts that are laid out for sleeping at night are neatly piled away in a niche. And the samovar for boiling tea gleams bright in the corner. The men take off their pants and jackets and sit in loose pajamas on the floor. A cloth is laid out in the middle. The women serve plates of mutton stew, flavored with local herbs. Beside each place they lay flat ovals of bread, baked in a mud-brick oven in the courtyard. The bread serves both as staple food and as utensil for eating the stew. When the men have finished the women carry out the food that is left. They eat with their children in the next room. After the meal many go to visit neighbors or sit talking. The women sometimes join the men and discuss the state of the land and crops, outstanding events such as weddings or deaths and, in recent years, the career of a favored son who has gone to the town to be educated. In winter the family keep warm under a *corsee*. Charcoal embers are placed on a tray beneath a low table, a large quilt is spread across, often reaching the walls of the small room, and everyone crowds underneath with only their heads and shoulders sticking out.

Weddings create great excitement. As they are a public affirmation of relationships between family groups as much as individual relationships between two people they are arranged by the families. It is the boy and girl who are involved, however, who have the first say. When the boy has seen the girl and taken a liking to her, he usually approaches the girl's family with an offer. Although for much of their lives they will spend more time with members of their own sex than with each other, they are under considerable social pressure to remain together. For the Iranian villager marriage is the most important step in his life. It is the means of access to land, status and security. On the day of a wedding a drummer

Entire Persian families may work for months to produce a single carpet: the father chants the color pattern to his wife and children, also tying knots.

and a flute player arrive to play, and a large meal for many guests is provided. The bride and groom are taken in procession to their respective bath houses to be washed, shaved and newly clothed. The groom wears a neat suit. The bride wears a long flowered dress and a white, full-length veil. At night the mothers of the couple, having given the girl the appropriate advice, make the public announcement of her virginity once the marriage has been consummated. Wedding days are the gayest days in the village.

Many of the religious feasts tend to be sadder occasions. The Shi'a Islam of Iran developed to some extent as a means of expressing a local identity within a religion brought by a foreigner. Although the Iranians wholeheartedly embrace Islam – with its message of equality and its warrior heroes with their understanding of human weakness – they nevertheless resented the Arab peoples who brought it to them. In the conflict over the true line of succession after Mohammed's death the Shi'a Muslims favored Ali, the prophet's son-in-law, and his appointed successors, Hassan and Hossein. They broke away from orthodox Sunni Islam, which accepted the political as well as religious domination of Arab Caliphs in Medina and Baghdad. They await the return of the twelfth Imam who disappeared while still young and without a successor. They acknowledge no one after him.

Each year the villager recalls the events of those turbulent years after Mohammed's death. He mourn-

The poor man's Persian carpet is a Kalam-Kar printed cloth which can be made into clothes or hung up as a wall decoration.

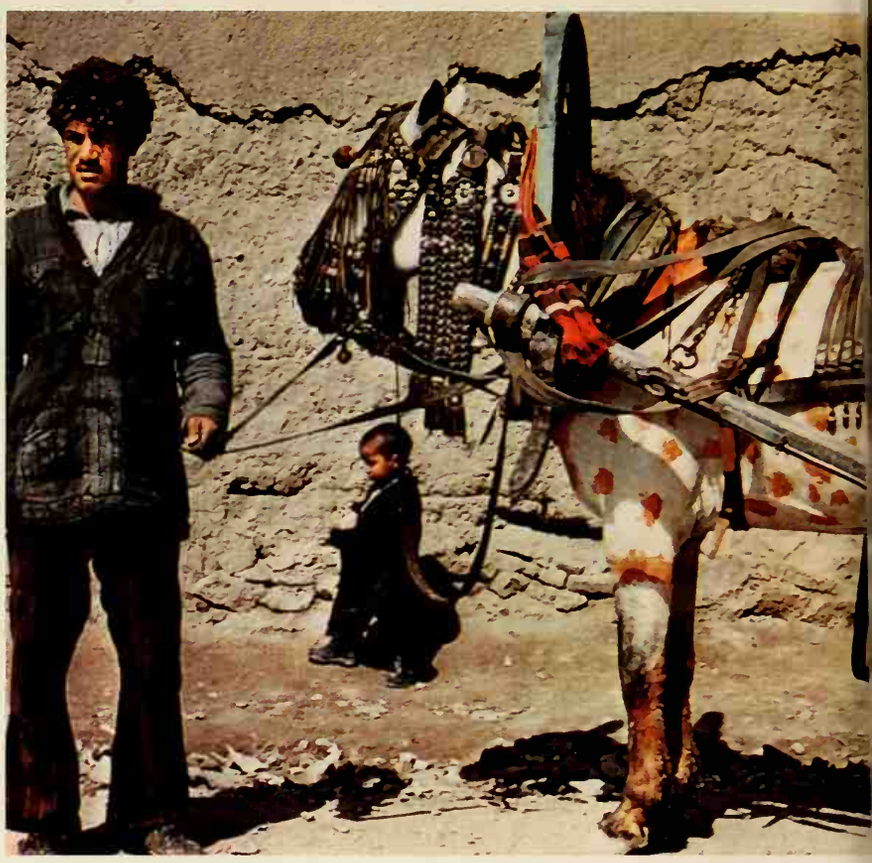
fully re-enacts the murders of Ali, Hassan and Hossein. All aspects of his daily life are based on the example and precepts of the prophet and his followers celebrated in the Holy Book, the Koran. His ritual reciting of prescribed prayer, alternate kneeling, standing and bowing on the prayer mat, which he performs in public five times a day, is only the surface expression of a deep faith that scorns the transitory world. It helps the villager cope with his poverty and gives him a sense of importance. The Shi'a Muslim villager, who sees himself as more 'advanced' than the followers of Christ, whose teachings Mohammed superseded, has a confidence and certainty that belie his poor material conditions.

The other major line of continuity in the Iranian village, one that enables foreign influences to be accommodated and then assimilated, is the villager's faith in the glorious Iranian past. The legends of that time when Iran was the founder of the world's first great empire were passed on through oral tradition and captured for posterity in the verse of Ferdowsi, a 12th century Iranian poet. His simple, easily remembered verse, which combines folklore and history, provides Iranians with a national epic accessible to all. In many teahouses in the towns and villages men earn their living by reciting from the epic, reaffirming a sense of identity, a common link with the past, a shared sadness in its loss.

Another major continuity factor in the Iranian village lies in the very physical conditions of life there and in the system that has evolved to cope with them. Five elements are necessary to grow cereals and grain crops in Iran's semi-arid plains: land, water, seed, draft animals or equipment, and human labor. These five elements have traditionally been shared between the peasant who works the land and the richer landlord who owns it. Each gets a proportion of the crop according to how many elements he provides. Thus the poorest peasant, who provides only labor, receives only one-fifth of the crop for himself and his family, while others get two- or three-fifths if they provide animals and seed. If a peasant reaches starvation level the landlord will usually lend him enough to survive. But this ties him even more irrevocably to the land. There are wheat and maize. As well as food, they provide stubble and stalks for animal fodder. The villagers also grow vegetables, grapes, and a few trees for fruit and nuts. Occasionally they plant a cash crop such as tobacco or opium. And then they collect wild plants and shrubs. Sheep and goats' wool provides yarn for village women, to weave rugs. In small mud rooms, with narrow doorways hardly admitting any light, women weave some of the world's most beautiful carpets on horizontal looms. They have learned local patterns from their mothers before them. They suckle children at their breasts as they carefully select the bright red and orange threads to be woven into symbolic flowers and geometric designs for merchants in the towns and, recently, the western tourist.

In some parts of Iran differences in terrain changed

By painting his horse and harnessing it in a special way this Tehrani hopes to keep his most valuable possession from the evil eye.



Kinsmen join together to dig a new water channel for their fields. Stones must be levered away with the help of a two-man spade.

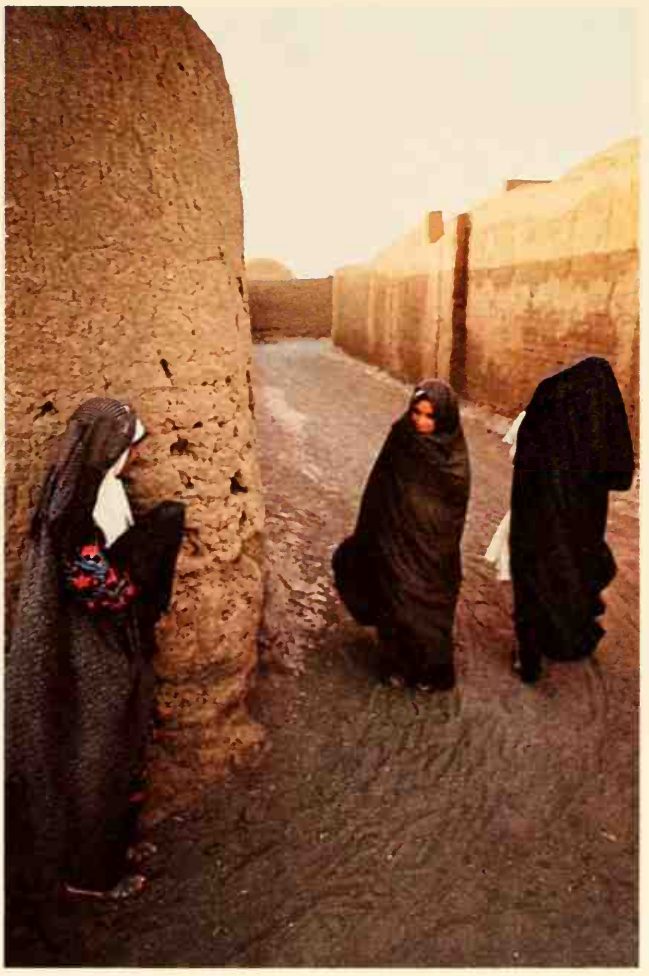
this general way of life. The two main mountain ranges form a large inverted V with its apex in the north-west and enclose the desert like the extended claws of a crab. They provide a more secure, more healthy livelihood for the inhabitants of the valleys. Water is more abundant here than in the plains and it supplies fresh fruit crops that are sold in the towns. Villages cluster on the steep southern side of the valley. The houses of mud, timber and stone climb the hillside on each other's backs, the flat roof of one providing the courtyard of the one above. Each family, rather than a common landlord, owns the orchards. As the towns expand and the demand for fruit increases these mountain villages, especially in the north, become richer, while the favorable climate and the abundance of water and shade make them popular picnic places for urban dwellers. In a country that is two-thirds desert this garden is idealized as a Paradise. Streams, trees and flowers are extolled in poetry and exquisitely represented in miniature paintings. The mountain peasant, who lives among the blossoms of spring, the cool shade of summer and the rich apple and pear harvest of autumn, is very aware how much more fortunate he is than the peasant of the plains.

Along the shores of the Caspian Sea in the north the physical conditions are again very different. High rainfall has created an area of lush green marsh and 'jungle' which vividly contrasts with the baked brown and yellow of the bare and arid plains. Here rice is grown in abundance and small hamlets, with orchards and trees, stand out from the flat green fields. The houses are different from both the mud domes of the plains and the flat roofs of the mountains. They are protected by steep-sloping roofs from the rain above and by high stilts from the swamps below. The frameworks are made from wood and the roofs are covered with rice straw. These houses are clustered in small groups, a collection of hamlets forming a village, unlike the closely-knit communities found elsewhere in Iran. Some landlords have recently brought to the area large-scale factory farming for cotton.

In all three areas, in fact, the influence of the modern technological state is beginning to be felt. Government schools bring new techniques of farming, machinery and medicine. And a land reform has attempted to take the land from the big landlords and give it to the peasant farmer to work in co-operatives. Many villagers no longer work by hand but hire tractors for sowing and reaping. And western goods such as washing powder, transistor radios and plastic household implements are a common part of daily life. These changes, however, have not undermined the traditional importance of religion and the family in the villages.

In the towns and cities of modern Iran change goes deeper. Increased trade and western influence has led to the growth of business quarters away from the old bazaars and many towns now boast an old and a new area. In the new area there are modern buildings of brick,

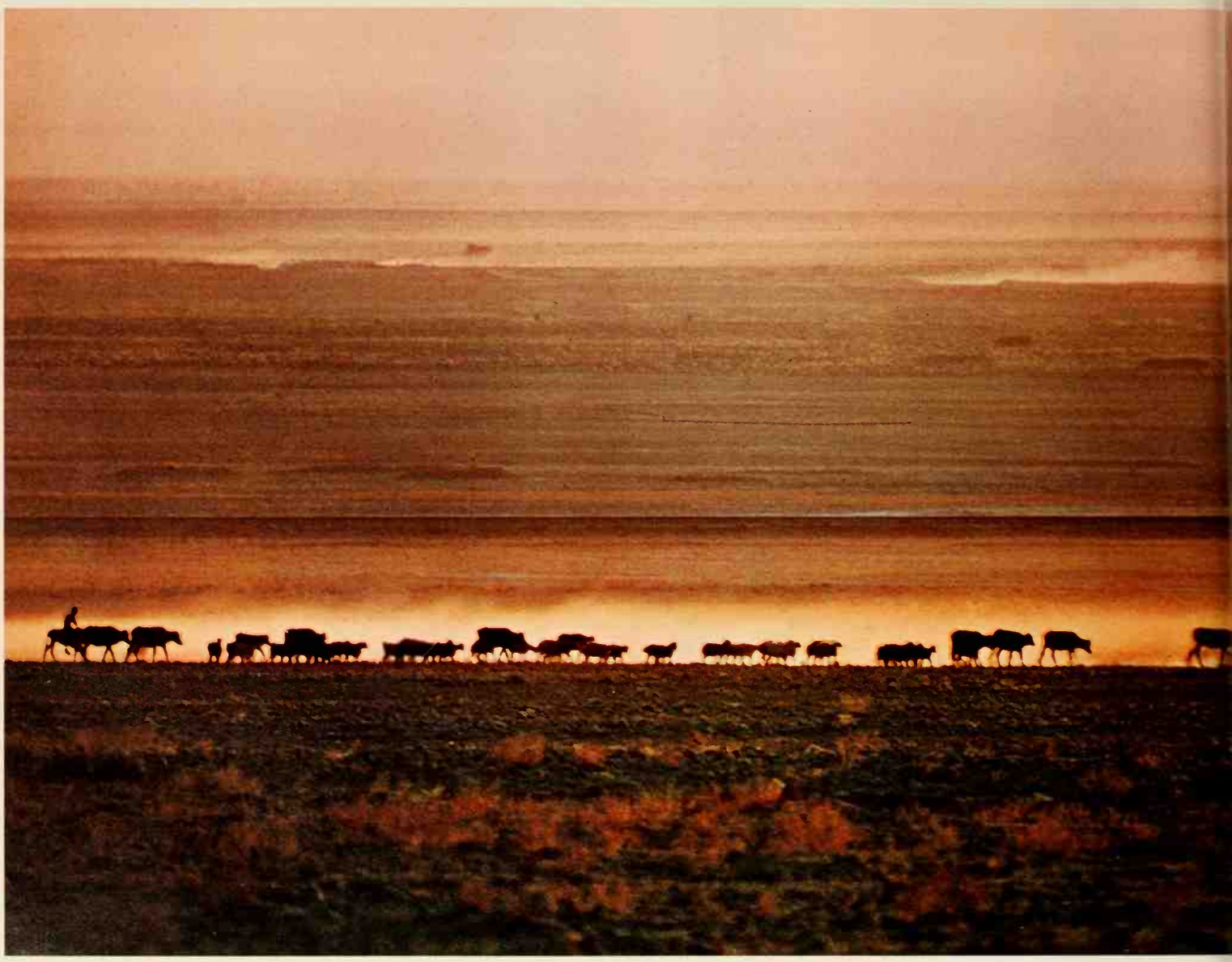
Civil law now forbids polygyny, but among the older generation in the villages it is still a sign of wealth and status to have more than one wife.



cement and steel in European fashion. And here youths in tight trousers and flowered shirts, girls in mini-skirts and businessmen in smart suits and ties work in air-conditioned offices and take lunch in clean-tiled rice kebab restaurants or hamburger bars. In the old quarter the bazaar remains the same. It is divided according to professions. There is a street of copper-beaters, another of jewelry, another of spices and another of carpets. The beating of hammers, the glint of jewels, the aroma of spices and the comforting mellowness of the carpet shop continue to provide the excitement and atmosphere that Europeans associate with the eastern market. Men in turbans and women in full-length veils jostle with Arab traders and American tourists. Trading is conducted over a glass of weak tea in an informal atmosphere of polite bargaining which can, in the case of a rich carpet, take days rather than hours.

In the same area as the bazaars are the great mosques. The Koran stresses the necessity for prayer and early in the history of Islam the mosques, public 'places of prostration', took on a special character and importance. The essential elements were an open courtyard with

Iranian farmers keep cows as draft animals as well as for their meat and milk. Women make yogurt, cheese and refreshing drinks from milk.



arcades on one or more sides and a covered sanctuary area which was the prayer niche, placed so that worshippers would face towards Mecca. One of the first things a Muslim is bound to do when he arrives in a strange city is to find the mosque. The high domes, often decorated in blue mosaic with even higher minarets from which the faithful are called to prayer, make his task easier, and contribute to the character of Iranian cities.

A distinctive aspect of the Iranian town for the foreigner is the open water system. *Jubes* or channels carry water from *qanats* down the sides of the streets, between lines of poplars and other trees and into side channels which are alternatively fed and blocked off by water foremen. Women gather at the *jubes* with their clothes and household pots and pans while children splash around them and men divert the water into gardens. Here it nourishes the cherished rose beds, shrubs and trees that provide the Persian with a daily glimpse of Paradise behind the protective wall of his courtyard. These *jubes* still run through both the old and the new parts of towns. In the capital, Tehran, *jubes* flow from the foothills of the Alborz, passing through the rich northern section of the city in cemented channels until they arrive in the poor south where the pollution in the water rises as the quantity falls.

The division between east and west and old and new apparent in Tehran is reflected elsewhere in Iran. In Meshed, the Holy City where two million pilgrims came to the shrine of Imam Reza in 1972, the bazaar and guest houses cluster around the magnificent courtyards and

In the mosque courtyard villagers commemorate the death of a local holy man. Men and boys beat their chests to the rhythm of dirges

(Bottom) The *tazie*, a passion play, re-enacts Husain's death. Here his assassin lashes out at the Imam's children who were later sold as slaves.

With one of the hottest climates in the world, the citizens of Taheri, on the Persian Gulf, work from dawn and rest during the midday heat.

A traveling acrobat entertains in Kangan, another Gulf town. As well as jumping through burning hoops, he does brisk trade in good luck charms.

Iranians who live on the shores of the Caspian Sea have four varieties of sturgeon to choose from. Caviar is made by beating sturgeon ovaries.

golden dome of the shrine, while the modern city is developing some distance away. Isfahan, a tourist center with its grand royal square and mosques, and Shiraz, an oasis in the southern desert, famous for gardens and poets, adapt more gracefully to the new influences. But many smaller towns wear the western façade uneasily.

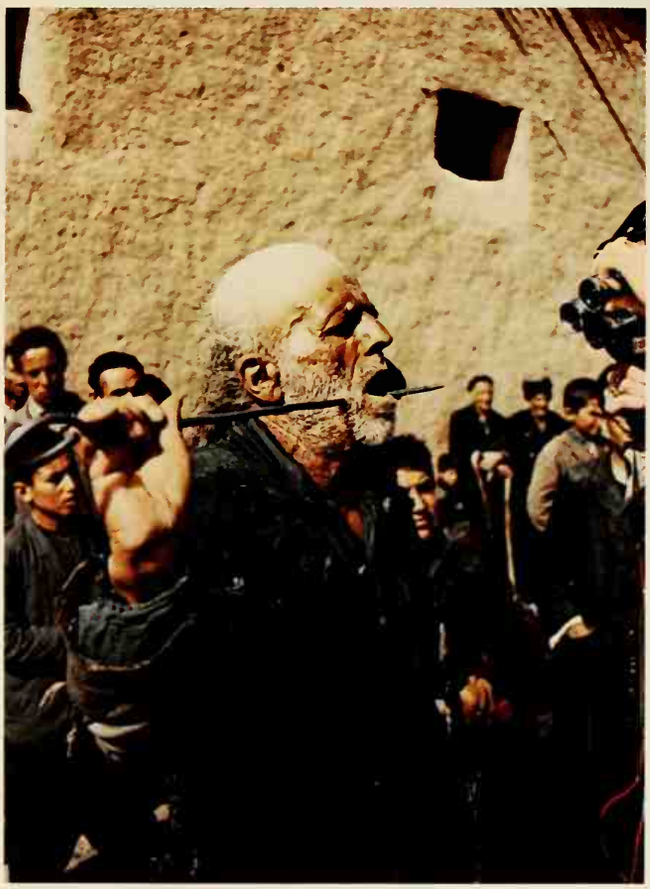
The parts of the town and city where new styles most often come into contact with traditional ways are the bus stations. Here men carry immense rolled mattresses containing most of the family possessions up ladders to the roofs of sleek, luxury buses, as their heavily-veiled wives wait below in a sea of children, students, traders and Coca-Cola sellers. The bus is decorated inside with hanging bobbins and balls, plastic gardens, pictures of the prophet and Ali, magazine advertisements for western goods and the driver's pin-ups. Sweeping across the vast deserts at 70 m.p.h. the buses provide a way of life as much as a journey, an Iranian adaptation of modern transport to the camel trains of old. The luxury coach has become the new 'ship of the desert'.

The other important meeting places are the parks. On public holidays the men stroll up and down the paths talking. And the families sit along the edges – as if holding court – with their blankets and mattresses spread out, samovar bubbling, pots of rice being distributed among the dozen or so relations, portable record players blasting out Tom Jones and other western favorites. Some youths wrestle in the traditional Persian manner, copying the styles of national heroes who still provide models of strength and virility like the Pahlavans of old. Professional wrestlers continue to present public performances and teach schoolchildren and win medals in the Olympic Games. Other youths pore over books as they prepare for all-important exams, the key to success in the developing world. Today the high schools and universities are, to some extent, replacing the old *zurkhana* where wrestling and religious values were taught, with the new symbols of degrees and exams. The educated youth of Iran are the tools of the 'White Revolution', the plans made by the Shahanshah to modernize the country. They carry education to outlying villages as members of an army 'Literacy Corps'. They staff the offices of numerous ministries working to 'improve' the conditions of rural and urban life. And they fill the cinemas, British Councils and Iran America Societies across Iran for a mixed and modern social life that is still difficult to find. They are providing the foundation for a new Iran, very different from the old Persia.

However, the traditional institutions of the family and religion continue to provide the foundations of life in town and village alike, despite the introduction of western influences. In the bazaars, the picnic grounds and the bus stations of modern Iran can be seen how Iranians are coping with the latest invasion in the time-honored way – by assimilating the new life-style to their own, uniquely Persian way of life.

The best caviar can only be made in winter and is difficult to preserve. It has been known in Europe as a delicacy since the 18th century.

Dervishes



In the middle of the 19th century John P Brown, in a classic account of Turkish dervishes, described the following ceremony as performed by a group of Rifa'i dervishes after they had gone through several stages of ecstatic ritual:

'Several cutlasses and other instruments of sharp-pointed iron are suspended in the niches of the hall, and upon a part of the wall to the right of the Sheik . . . two Dervishes take down eight or nine of these instruments; heat them red-hot and present them to the Sheik. He, after reciting some prayers over them, and invoking the founder of the Order, Ahmed Rufa'ee, breathes over them, and raising them slightly to the mouth, gives them to the Dervishes, who ask for them with the greatest eagerness. Then it is that these fanatics, transported by frenzy, seize upon these irons, gloat upon them tenderly, lick them, bite them, hold them between their teeth, and end by cooling them in their mouths. Those who are unable to procure any, seize upon the cutlasses hanging on the wall with fury and stick them into their sides, arms, and legs.'

In other parts of the Muslim world different groups of dervishes practise their own rituals. In Turkey the famous Mevlevi or Mawlawi dervishes, known to us in the west as the whirling dervishes, stimulate a state of ecstasy by a continual whirling movement. The Rifa'i, known as the howling dervishes, eat snakes, swallow hot coal and glass or cut themselves with knives. Groups of Naqshbandi dervishes in Persia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan follow a form of silent religious devotion. Chishtis in India retire from the world in solitary contemplation.

But what is it all about? What do they achieve by what might appear to us as outlandish stunts but to the dervishes are essential steps in their religious process? And above all, who or what are dervishes?

The first thing to understand is that the dervishes are mystics. Just as Christianity and Judaism have had great mystic movements or individuals, so has Islam. By their Islamic mysticism they believe that through one process or another it is possible for an individual to have direct experience of God. The theory and doctrine for this belief within Islam was laid down by the many writings and preachings of the Sufis. One meaning of 'Sufi' derives from the fact that the Arabic word *suf* means wool and so was used by the original ascetics in imitation of Christian hermits who wore woolen robes. And so it was the Sufis who provided the theory and the dervishes who provided the practice, which meant that many individuals were – and are – considered as both dervish and Sufi.

Unlike Christianity and the organization of the church, Islam had no form of corporation around which to organize the faith, and no fixed hierarchy of leadership from a Pope down to a priest. Up until the 12th century Islam relied upon the individual searching for a link between God and himself, perhaps through meditation or at most through his links with a religious teacher. Obedience to the teachings of a sheik or *pir* (religious guide) was set down during the 12th century as of paramount importance by one of the greatest Sufis of all, al-Ghazali, who, for example, wrote of the disciple: 'let him know that the advantage he gains from the error of his sheik, if he should err, is greater than the advantage he gains from his own rightness, if he should be right.' So at first the main group disappeared soon after the death of the holy man. Only after the 12th century did the teachings of certain Sufis bring about the creation of sects and holy orders the members of which were later known as dervishes. The main purpose of the dervish sects was, and still is, to help the individual relate to God through instruction, initiation, discipline and experience. The problem in understanding and explaining this was aptly put by the poet Robert Graves who once wrote of Islamic mysticism that 'whoever understands it is himself a Sufi.'

In different parts of the Muslim world many groups of deeply religious mystics belong to orders of dervishes who all believe in the same goal but follow different paths

(Above) This dervish who has impaled his cheek is a mystic believing that self-mortification is possible because of his direct experience of God.

to reach it and interpret the sayings of the founder of each group in different ways.

What do all seek so earnestly? 'Tis Love.
Love is the subject of their inmost thoughts
In Love no longer 'Thou' and 'I' exist,
For self had passed away in the Beloved.
Farid Al-Dim 'Attar

This excerpt from the poem of a great 13th-century Sufi, Farid Al-Dim 'Attar, is typical of the ideal behind dervish activities; an ideal that could be attained as much by lacerating the body with irons as by total seclusion and meditation. The orders are sometimes organized in a monastic form centered in one place but they can as easily be spread over as broad an area as that incorporating Africa, India and Indonesia. All the orders however trace a spiritual link with the respective founder of the order and it is in fact by the techniques of the founder that the dervish is characterized. Another common characteristic is that each separate dervish order has a particular distinctive garb worn by all its members. And so we see that the whirling dervishes of Turkey (the Mevlevi) wear tall hats, the Badawi of North Africa wear red turbans or the Haidari of Khurasan wear iron rings on their necks, ears and fingers.

The novice trains to conquer pain and unite with God by endlessly reciting 'Yah Allah' with breathing exercises, dancing or self-immolation.

To become a dervish always involves a long and arduous period as a novice and even when the new member is fully admitted, the rituals are long and need total commitment. The main ritual of the dervishes is the *dhikr* or 'remembering' which can mean interminably reciting aloud a phrase *(dhikr-jali)* such as 'Yah Allah' or 'Yah hu' accompanied by breathing exercises, dancing or self-immolation; or it can mean mental recitation *(dhikr-dhafi)* and meditation. The purpose in every case is to achieve a state whereby the body loses all importance and the soul becomes all-important. Many Sufis believe that the attainment of a state of ecstatic trance is a sign of the degeneration of Islamic mysticism and that it is only necessary as a means of showing the ordinary man the heights that can be reached in searching for unity with God. The state of *hal* (ecstatic trance) is very like a religious drug for the soul that is administered by a unique form of physical or mental action.

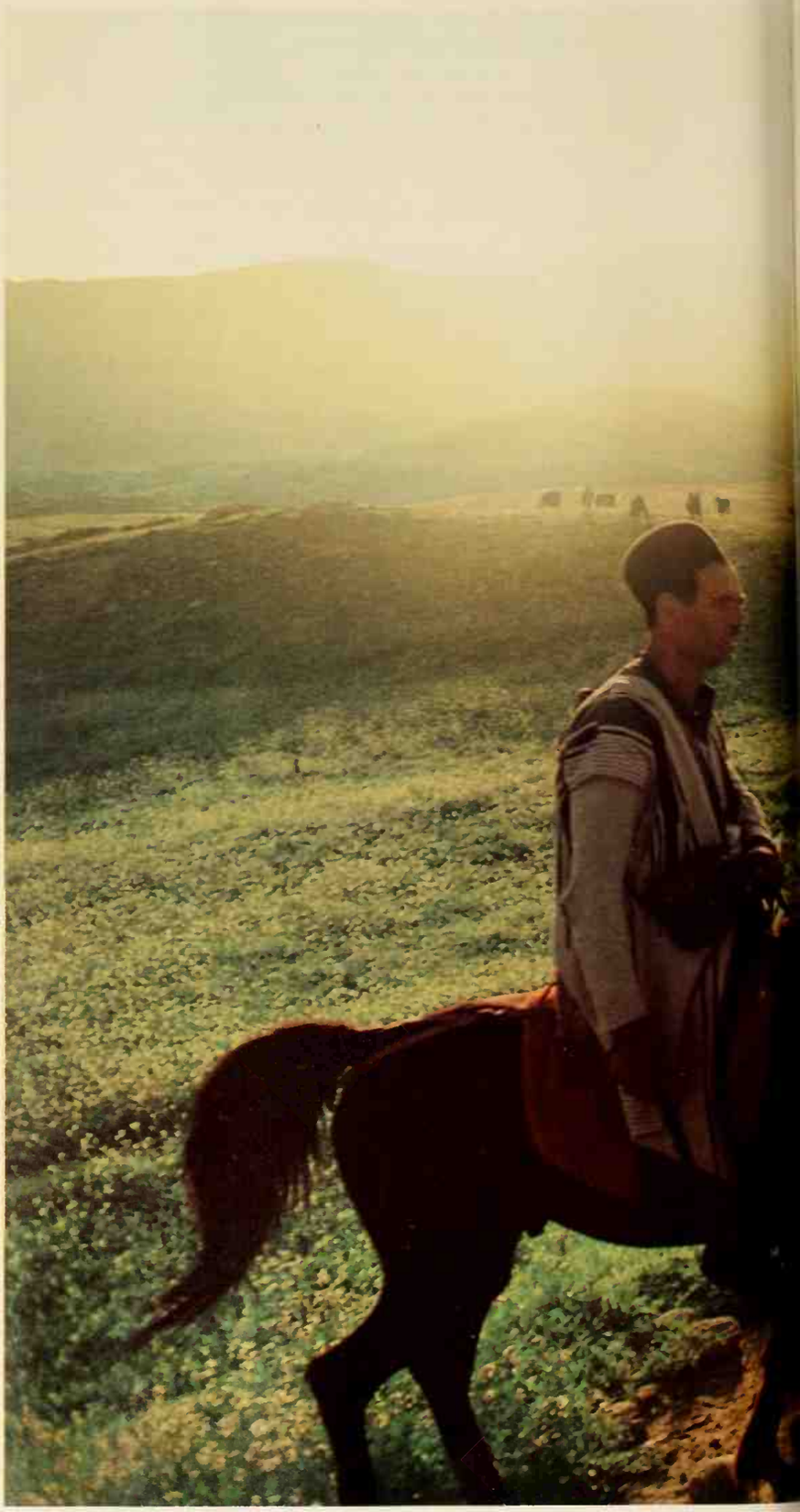
The aims of most dervish orders were and are religious – towards a communion with God; but various groups have had political or educational purposes. The Sanusi of Cyrenaica for example aimed at restoring a pure Islamic society by political means and the order stood for a while as a strong political as well as religious movement – for example, the sheik of the order became King of Libya (Sayyid Idris) before oil and modernization led to a final collapse of dervish power. This political role occurred also in Turkey and among the Kurds and finally led to Ataturk abolishing dervish orders after 1925. The orders still exist there, but in common with most of central Asia, their numbers have been substantially declining.

The main dervish orders of central Asia still of some importance in the Muslim world are the Mevlevi, the Naqshbandi, the Bektashi and the Chishti. Groups of Chishti are found mainly in India but came originally from Khurasan in Persia and are characterized by their wandering habits and their use of music in their ritual exercises. The Naqshbandi have a reputation for piety and are the largest of the central Asian dervish groups found among the Kurds, in Anatolia, in the Caucasus and in Afghanistan and India. The Rifa'i and Haidari were for many centuries the most influential of all dervish groups, possibly because of the extremity of their *dhikr* acts, performed using fire and snakes. They are to be found in the Arab world as well as in central Asia, but after the 15th century they gradually declined in importance and now although they exist all over the Muslim world, they are largely banned by authorities who feel that their rituals are barbaric and do not conform to the current image of modernization. Mevlevi and Bektashi are two orders that have lately replaced the Rifa'i in importance.

Bakhtiari
Iran

For the Bakhtiari, the great migrations which belong to the history of so many of the nomadic peoples of western Asia are still part of the present. The Bakhtiari are among the last of the mountain nomads for whom the yearly migrations from winter to summer pastures, with flocks of sheep or herds of goats, often cover 200 miles and take up two or even three months of every year. These migrations through the high passes and rocky gorges of the Zagros mountains of western Iran are precarious journeys which frequently take their toll of both animals and men. To the people, living in black goat-hair tents in encampments of no more than 15 families, the migrations can be a matter of life and death. If they do not move from the pastures of winter, their animals may die of starvation; and if they do not return here from the summer pastures, the animals are likely to die of the cold. Without their animals the Bakhtiari themselves cannot survive.

The Bakhtiari live in a region covering some 30,000 square miles in the central part of the Zagros mountains. The region is formed by a series of fertile plateaux and



Spring is the time for the Bakhtiari to move with their flocks from the winter camps across the great mountains to high summer pastures

Women, both old and young, must walk throughout the long migration. The march may take a month and cross 250 miles of rough, mountainous land.

(Right) Maneuvering sheep along a precipitous rock path, the nomads file across the mountain face like a thin line of ants.

mountain valleys in which hundreds of villages have been built. On the valley floors there is extensive cultivation; but the upper slopes of the foothills are used to graze the flocks and herds, and it is here that the Bakhtiari nomads live through the winter months.

Between November and January the winter rains are expected, though like everything else they are unreliable. If the rains do not come, or fall late, then crops fail and the grazing withers. In some places one valley will have heavy rainfall while its neighbor nearby suffers a drought. Every year is unpredictable and brings its own problems for nomads and farmers alike. Sometimes it is a plague of locusts or an epidemic which destroys the crops and decimates the flocks.

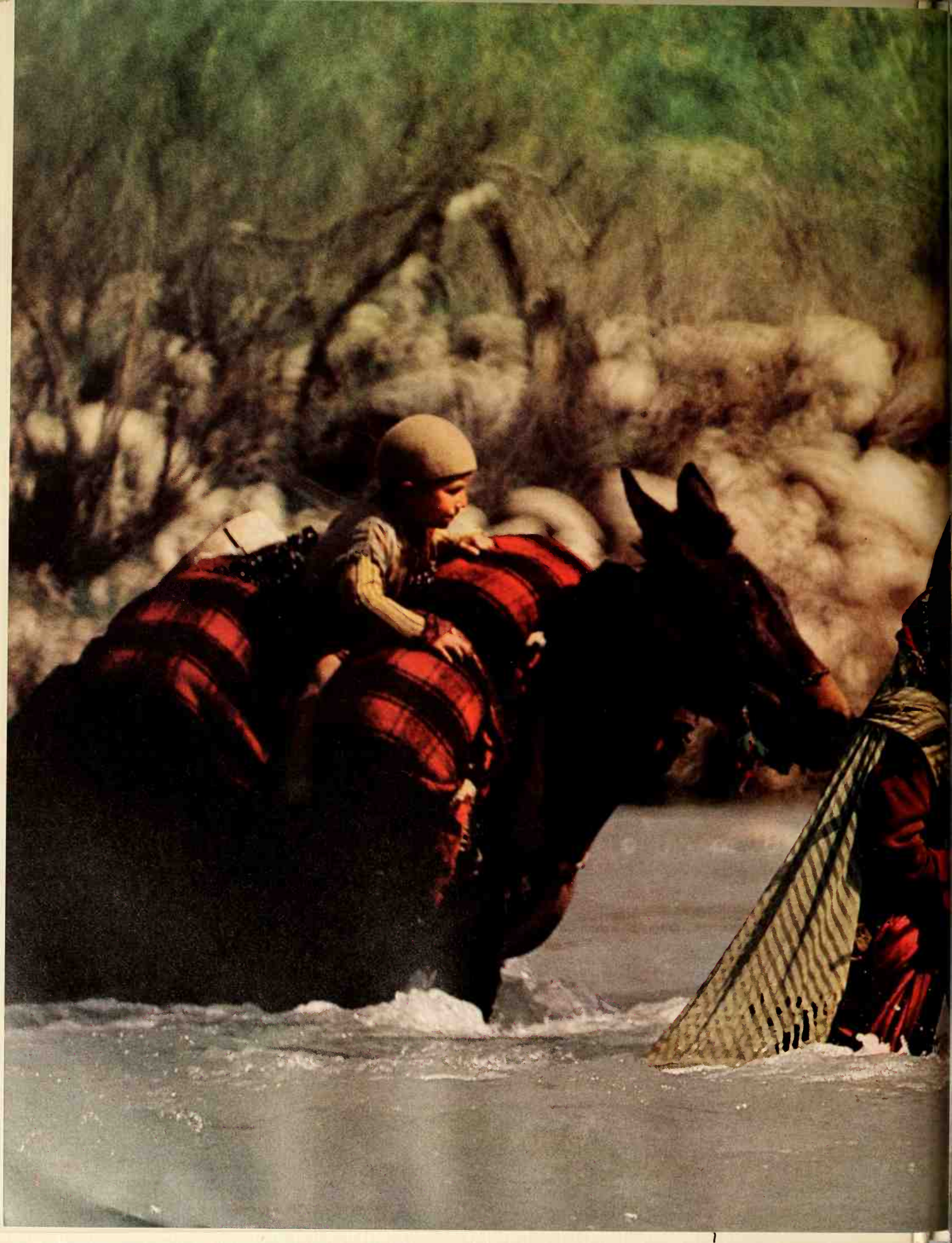
In late spring the 'warm country' of the winter pastures begins to dry up and the grazing grows thin, denuded by the flocks. Then it is time to move to higher summer pastures in the east. For the Bakhtiari nomads, this journey means crossing some 200 miles of rugged mountainous country before reaching their summer quarters on the eastern side of the Zagros ranges. These summer pastures, called the 'cold country' are in high valleys where the air is cool and animals can be grazed until the late autumn. In the late summer months they slowly move down to the valley floor to graze on the stubble of harvested fields.

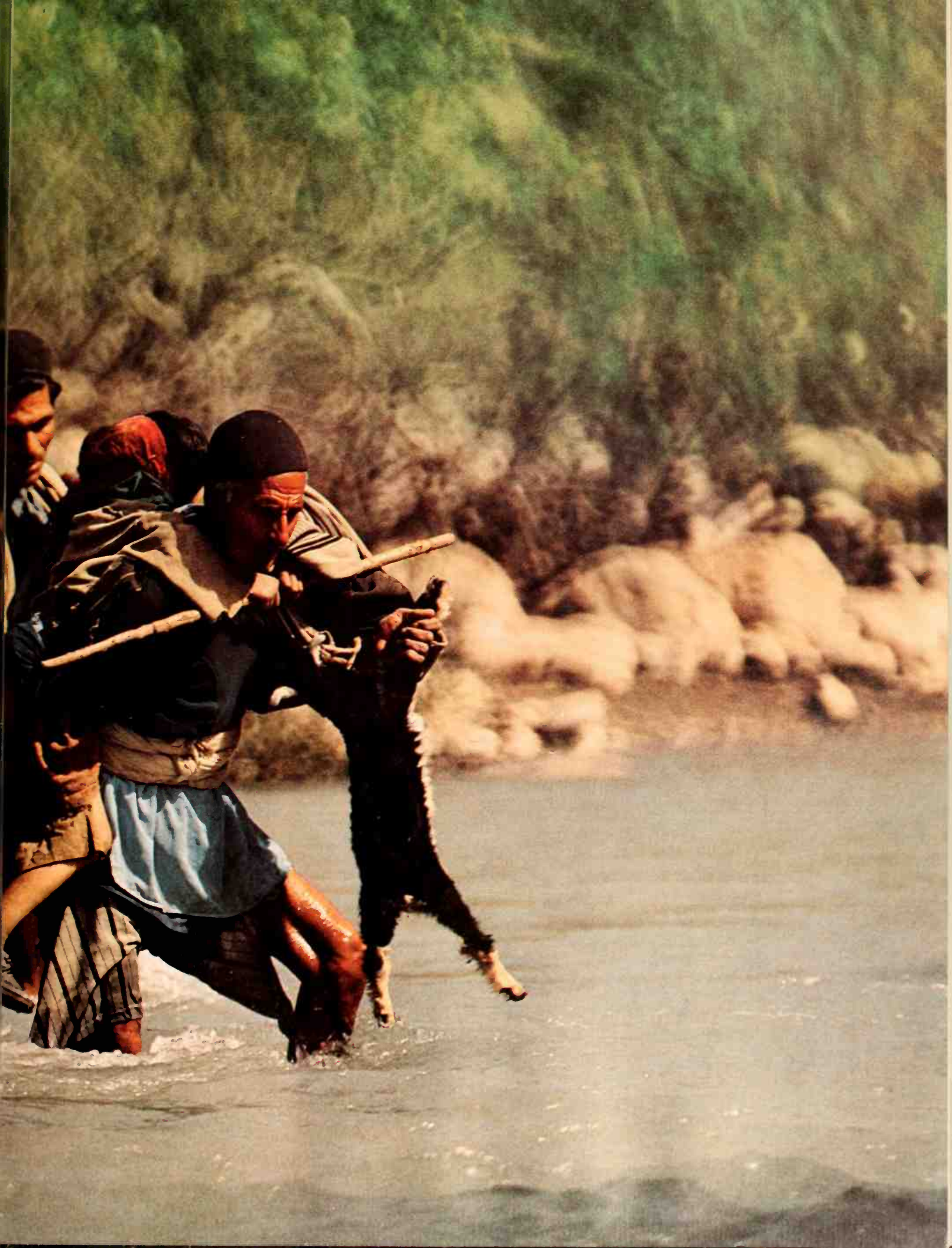
The spring migration is slow and the animals are grazed on progressively higher pastures. But in autumn,

Traveling for five hours, the sheep grazing like locusts along the mountainsides, the nomads halt, raise the black tent and light fires.

(Center) A market town is filled with excitement for the impending migration. Men fill saddle-bags with flour, dates and rice – all bought on credit.

(Over page) Animals and dry provisions have to be ferried across the swirling rivers. Women and children are followed by men and flocks.





The hoof of a mule is cut back before being shod. These animals do not represent wealth, but they are indispensable to the nomads.

(Bottom) The wealth of the Bakhtiari is in their sheep. From rough wool a woman spins yarn which is woven into *chogas* – woolen coats.

By midday the day's work is over for the men. Settled in a valley with grazing for the sheep, there is time to rest and to smoke.

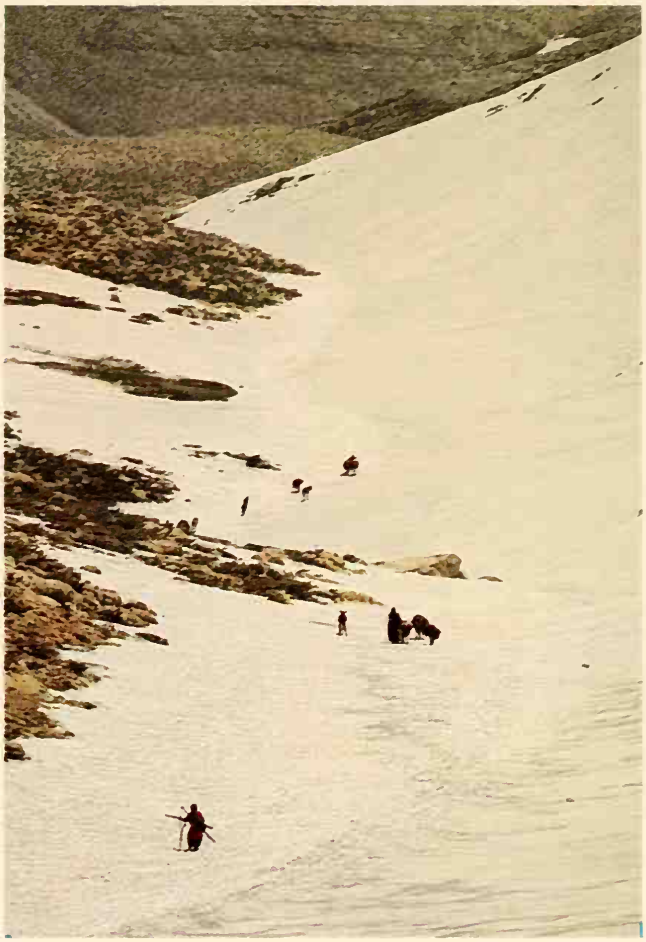
(Bottom) In every valley there is a cemetery; graves are outlined with stones and engraved with accounts of the deceased's bravery.

after the hot sun of the summer months, there is little grass even high in the mountains. This migration is faster, a time of privation with only thin pasture for the animals.

It is wild country which they cross during these migrations, spectacular and hazardous. The young and the old, the healthy and infirm climb on foot over higher and higher mountain ranges, through windswept rocky gorges, along precipitous cliff faces, across fast icy rivers and over freezing snow-bound mountain passes. But between the mountain ranges there are valleys, lush with grass in the spring, and here the nomads can rest their animals before tackling the next mountain.

During the spring the weather increases the difficulties of migrating through an already difficult land. Lack of water, intense heat and frequent duststorms hinder the start of the journey. Gale force winds, rainstorms and occasional electric storms sap the energy of the animals and make the going treacherous underfoot. In places the pathways along cliff faces are only a few feet wide. Pack animals panic and collapse under the weight of their loads. They have to be encouraged with a hefty whack and much screaming by irate tribesmen to move along in single file, nose to tail. The path and tracks are worn as

At 11,000 feet in the mountains the nomads cross vast expanses of snow and ice where the animals often slip and fall as the ground gives way



smooth as glass by centuries of traffic, often slippery with rain or the blood of animals with wounds and cuts on their limbs. Frequently the animals slither over the cliffs and crash to the ground hundreds of feet below. The loss of a donkey with its stores, household equipment – or even worse, the tent – spells disaster for a family.

Snow storms and sub-zero temperatures are common in the highest ranges. A sudden overnight drop in temperature can wipe out whole herds. To be suddenly caught by a blizzard while only halfway over an exposed mountain pass, unable to go forward or back, may mean death for the people as well as for their animals. There are many tales of nomads discovering whole families frozen to death. Fingers and toes in particular suffer from frostbite. Swollen with melting snow the rivers are another severe hazard to the nomads and their animals. The herds have to be swum across and hundreds if not thousands of sheep and goats are drowned annually. Until recently when bridges were built, in bad years the only way of crossing the Karun and Bazuft rivers was by *kalak* or rafts built on the spot by lashing branches to inflated goat skins.

The weather conditions vary from year to year. Even nomads traveling the same route, but a few days or weeks later, often encounter very different weather. There are crucial decisions to be made: when to start the migration, whether to cross a particular pass at once in spite of threatening weather, at what point to swim the animals across the river. The Bakhtiari nomad has no control over severe ecological and climatic conditions except through his own knowledge of the mountains and his skill, acquired by long experience. Good judgement is essential for efficient herding; the successful nomad learns to negotiate the physical hazards of the environment with minimal losses to his flocks. But misfortune strikes the efficient and inefficient indiscriminately, and luck plays an important part in the nomadic life. Poor judgement can steadily erode a flock over the years bringing a gradual impoverishment; sheer misfortune can wipe out a whole flock, a man's weath and livelihood, at one time. It takes years to build up a new flock of sheep.

Severe animal losses are important in inducing some Bakhtiari to turn to cultivation and settlement. An alternative method of adjusting to catastrophic losses, yet remaining within the nomadic style of life, is to become a contracted shepherd, working for a wealthier tribesman in return for sheep. These contracts usually last for several years. Since the possibilities of such employment are limited, however, many Bakhtiari are forced to accept a sharp drop in their standard of living, some may be forced to rely on their kinsmen for help.

Animal wealth is precarious and unstable and most of the wealthier nomads invest in agricultural land. Some nomads may own over 1,000 animals, split into smaller herds under the care of shepherds: a flock of more than 200 sheep is unmanageable for one shepherd. But there are also many Bakhtiari who migrate with fewer than a dozen sheep. And this number is not enough to support a family. Such tribesmen survive with difficulty and are finally forced out of the nomadic way of life.

Of some 600,000 Bakhtiari there are possibly 200,000 who still migrate regularly. These nomads live and migrate in camp groups of between four and fifteen tents. The same families do not necessarily migrate together every year, but at any given time the members of a camp group will either be close patrilineal kinsmen, related by marriage, or of the same descent. They form a co-operative group and are bound by mutual kinship obligations. Nomads are dependent on their kin for help and perhaps food when they have lost the pack animal which is carrying the food supplies. The size of a camp group tends to increase in times of insecurity, when threatened by marauding tribesmen or because of feuds between different sections of the Bakhtiari. Thieves abound in the mountains, particularly in the central, more isolated, regions. They must take great care to protect the flocks. At the turn of the century most carried rifles but now the Bakhtiari, like most of the Zagros tribes, have been subject to sporadic and successful

Beneath the awning of a black goat-hair tent, the men sit around camp fires in the company of the *maal* – the smallest tribal unit.

In the afternoon goats are brought to the tents by young shepherds who are no more than boys. Goats are milked only by the women.

attempts to disarm them by the Iranian Government.

The size of any camp will also depend on the total number of sheep owned by the individual members. The availability of water and grazing limit the number of sheep which can graze together. In the winter quarters camps are often smaller than the size which is best during a migration.

Daily life in the camps has a strikingly different tempo between the time of the hectic, strenuous activity of the migration and the leisurely, stable weeks in summer and winter pastures. Men are responsible for the herding and protection of the animals, and patrol the flocks during the night when on the move. Loading and unloading the pack animals, and pitching the heavy tents is also done by the men. At the end of the spring migration, the sheep are sheared, a task which all the men share. Men are also responsible for buying and selling sheep. Ewes lamb in the early spring and are only sold after they have ceased to produce lambs. But all rams of about a year old are sold to the peasants and townsmen. Only a few, usually no more than one ram for every 50 ewes, are kept for breeding purposes.

The Bakhtiari use the money from the sale of wool and sheep to buy wheat flour for bread, rice, tea, sugar, salt and clothes. They buy and sell in the peasant villages on the edges of their tribal territory and prefer to trade with specific merchants. Long-standing debts owed to merchants are paid off by the sale of young animals. But if the nomad has lost his animals he falls deeper into debt and buys on credit at a high rate of interest. After several weeks crossing the mountains, provisions of food are always low and the nomads are in a weak bargaining position. Some nomads will travel on to more distant towns in order to get better prices.

Women do all the domestic chores. They organize the tent, arranging the baggage to form a wall over which the tent it pitched. They collect water in goatskin containers, milk the sheep and goats every day, make yogurt, cook the meals and bake mounds of paper-thin unleavened bread over an open fire. Bread and yogurt are the staple foods with rice and an occasional piece of meat – except for the poorest. Meat is however only eaten on ceremonial occasions like funeral feasts, wedding celebrations and when entertaining guests. The people are

A young Bakhtiari girl carries a kid. The tribe's children are well-behaved, are often married at 13, and consider themselves old at 25

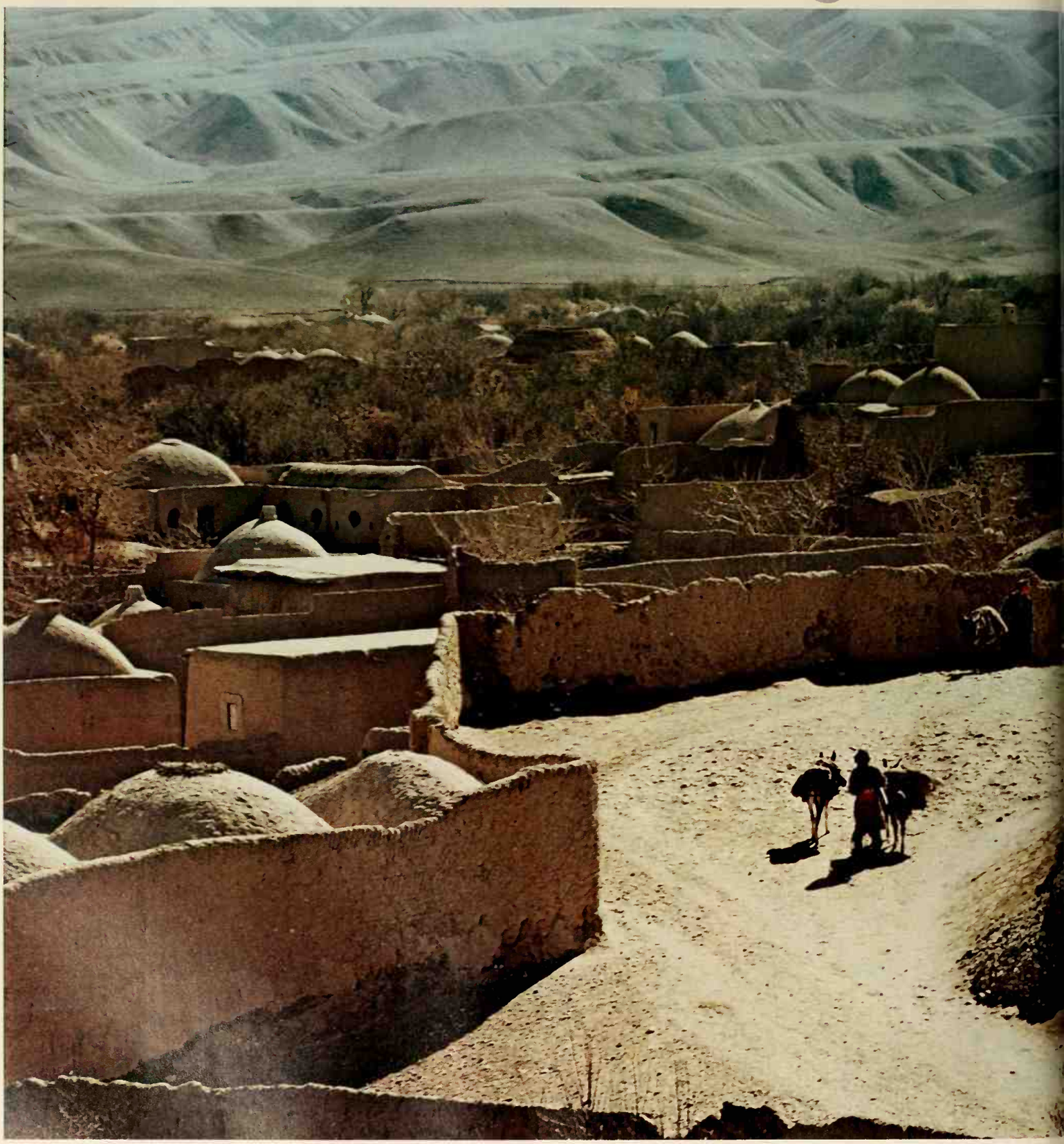
Beyond the highest slopes, after weeks of traveling, are the cool summer pastures where already the snow has melted. The end of the journey.

strict about the rules of hospitality. Food, or at least tea, is offered to every visitor. The more prestigious and honored is the guest the more lavish is the hospitality. Sometimes an animal will be sacrificed as a mark of esteem. Women never eat with the men if there are any strangers or guests in the tent. As is common to most Muslim societies the world of women is separated from that of the men. Yet tribal women enjoy more freedom than peasant women. They are not veiled and under nomadic conditions the seclusion of women is .not feasible. While excluded from much of political life tribal women can exert considerable influence. They do not hesitate to fight alongside their men when the occasion demands. Some women have played important political roles in tribal life. They are called lion women.

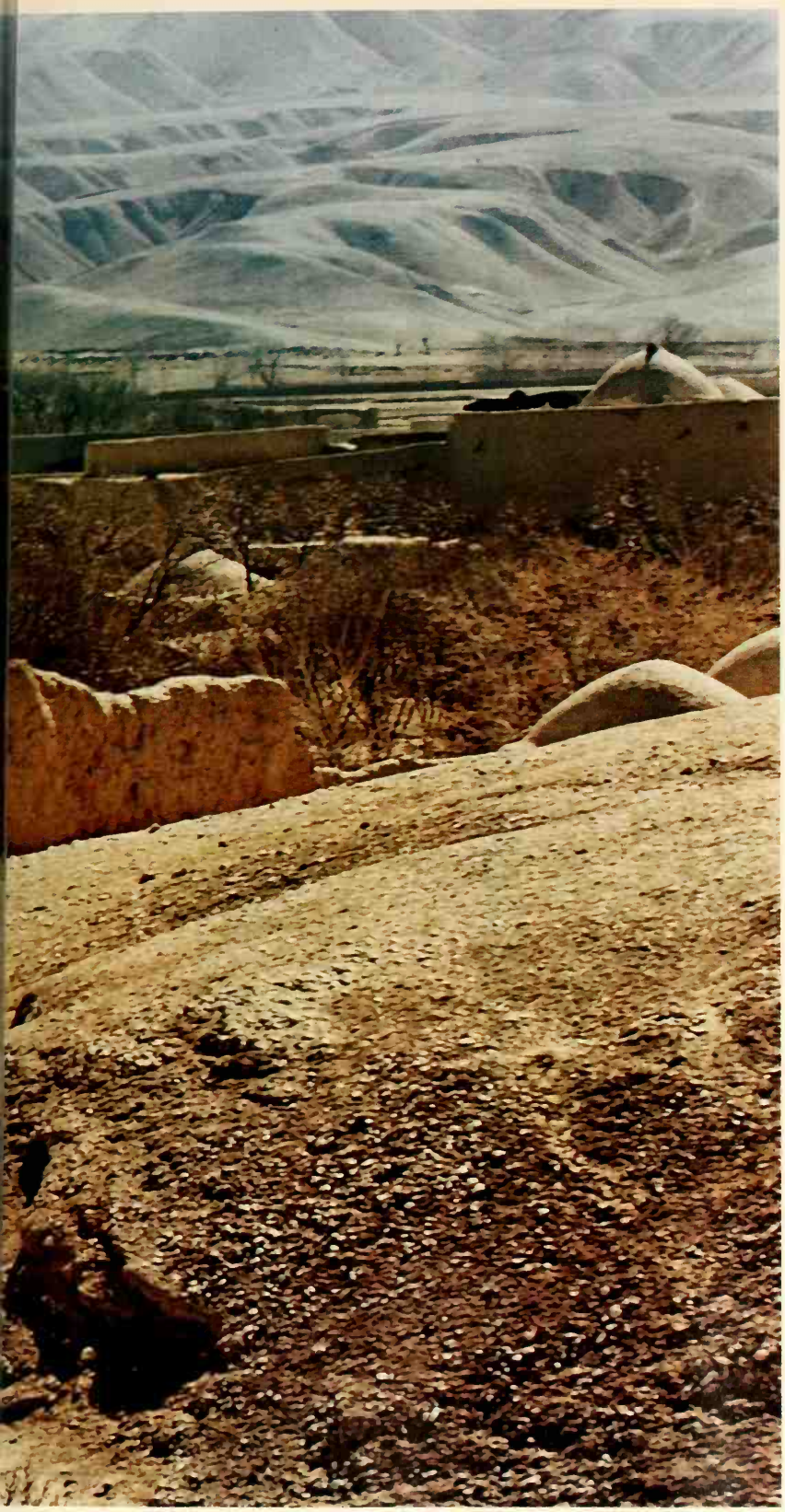
The Bakhtiari are divided into many tribes, and more numerous sub-tribes, or *taifeh*. The *taifeh* is the most relevant social and political unit for the Bakhtiari. These *taifeh* groups have their own territories in both summer and winter pastures. The leaders of the *taifeh* are both arbiters of relationships within the *taifeh* and representatives of their *taifeh* in all relationships with other *taifehs*. These relationships are often antagonistic. Blood feuds persist between many groups for generations. Members of a *taifeh* think of themselves as descendants of one distant ancestor – although this is often a political fiction. Marriage is rare between different groups, except in the case of leaders who marry women from other *taifehs* for political reasons. Most marriages within the *taifeh* are made between close kin, and traditionally a boy will prefer to marry the daughter of his father's brother.

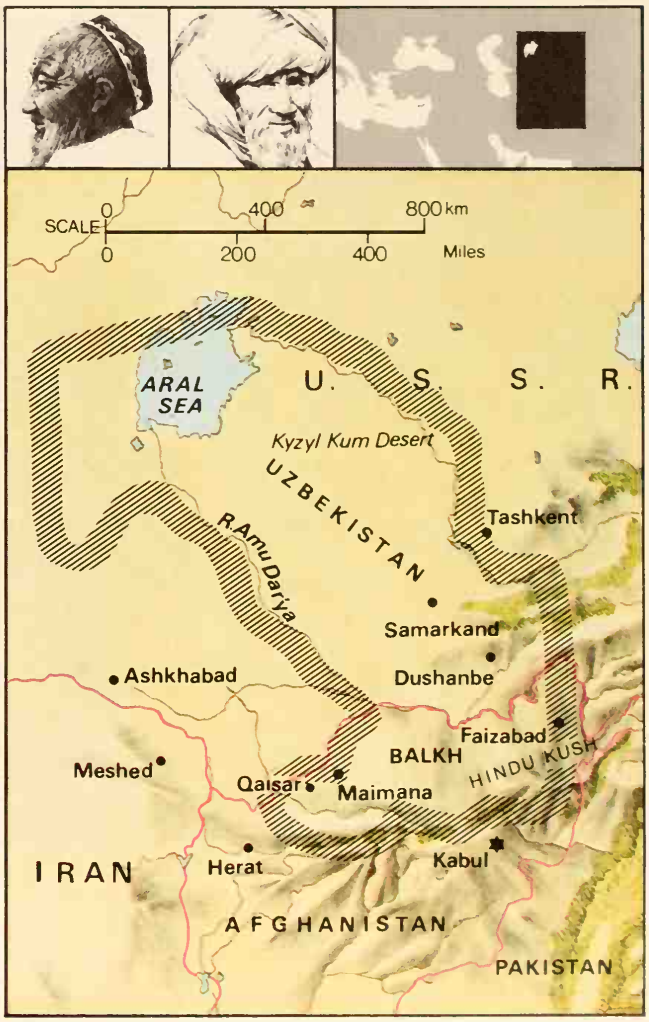
The *taifehs* are further subdivided into smaller descent groups so that a family's neighbors are also its close kin. Camp groups are made up of these small descent groups. The smallest of these groups, with communal rights to land – is called a *korboh*, which means literally 'sons of the father'. Reliance on kinsmen's help and co-operation is necessary to all nomads. But as more nomads turn to a settled way of life and agriculture this reliance becomes less relevant.

Uzbek
Soviet Central Asia and Afghanista



On bazaar days this sleepy little town in northern Afghanistan becomes crowded with fierce Uzbek tribesmen from villages in the hills.



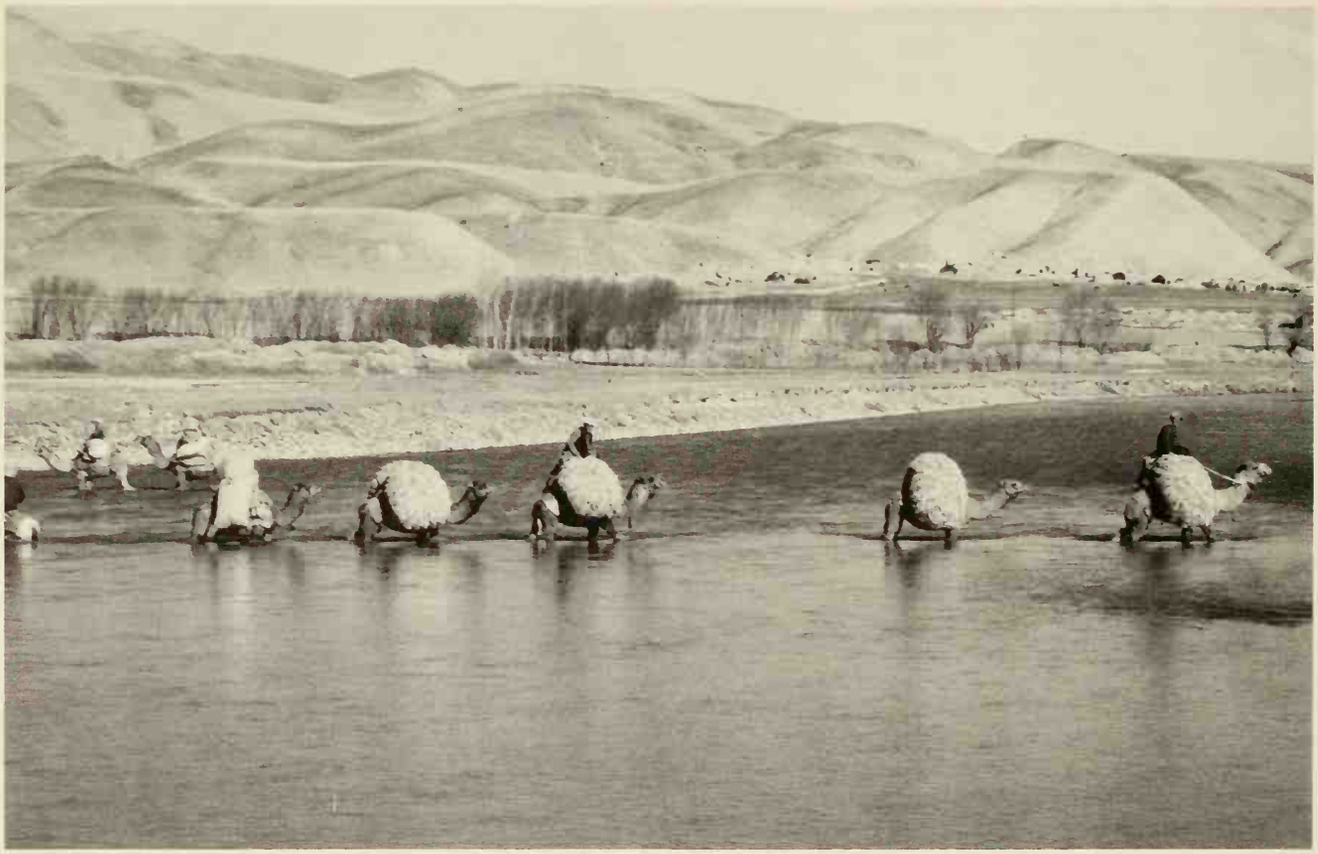


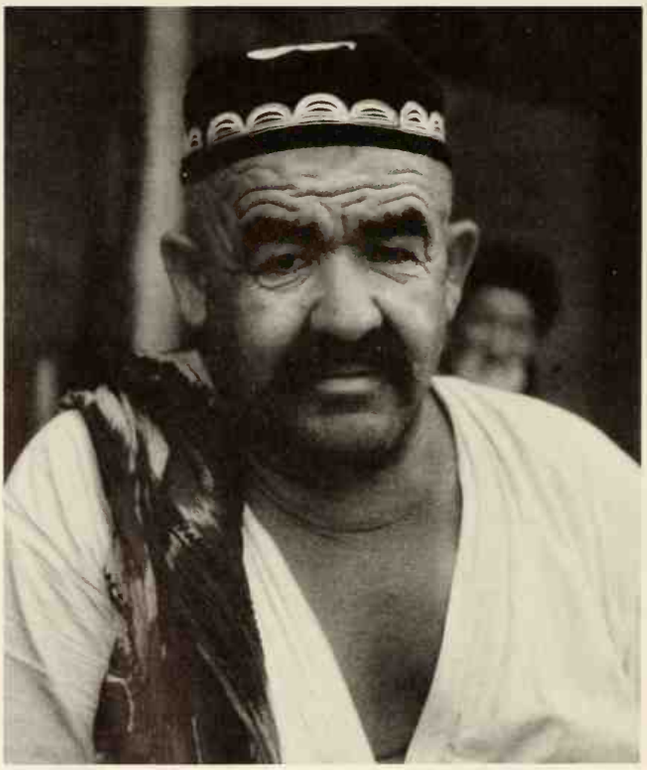
The Uzbek have never forgotten they once ruled the central Asian steppes and, as notorious warrior horsemen, invaded Russia with the Golden Horde and the legendary Genghis Khan.

The great horse-riding nomadic culture of Central Asia began to develop about 1000 BC among the Indo-European peoples who were then dominant – the Scyth, the Kushan and others. They spread from the borders of China to Asia Minor and eastern Europe. The peoples of Mongolia adopted the same nomadic way of life and first spread to the west in the 6th century AD, at the same time as Attila and the Turkic-speaking Huns were surging westwards.

Turkish tribes proper began to move into central Asia during the 6th and 7th centuries and by the 10th they were masters of the grasslands of the eastern Caliphate, and Turkish Muslim dynasties replaced the Persian Muslim dynasties which had converted them to Islam. The Mongols, the Golden Horde under Genghis Khan, returned in great strength in the early 13th century, sweeping away kingdom after kingdom as they moved

A caravan of straw-laden camels is owned by an Uzbek. Formerly nomads, all the Uzbek are now farmers or skilled bazaar artisans.





The proud Uzbek have never forgotten their past when they ruled the Central Asian steppes and invaded Russia with Genghis Khan's Golden Horde.

Uzbekistan is Russia's cotton producer and large amounts of food must be imported while the state farms are devoted to the cotton crop.

ever westwards. Genghis Khan was a brutal, brilliant military tactician on a scraggy Mongol pony leading an army which seemed to be part-horse. He made history by destroying the finest civilization of his day, and carved an empire from the China Sea to the Caspian Sea. But it was a transient empire; its ruler slept in a tent instead of a palace and his monuments were many ruined cities and silted canals. The Uzbek joined the Mongol hordes and reputedly Uzbek contingents accompanied the Golden Horde into South Russia in the 13th century; and in the 14th it was an Uzbek Khan who ruled the Golden Horde. Finally Uzbek conquered much of the steppes north of the Amu Darya and controlled them until the beginning of the 17th century.

By the 18th century the various principalities of central Asia were all controlled by one Uzbek ruler or another, and endlessly warring with each other. But the balance was upset by British and Russian imperialist competition in India and by the 19th century the Tsar of Russia had absorbed almost all the Uzbek khanates into his Asian empire. The Uzbek formed the backbone of many *basmachi* – bandits to the Russians, freedom-fighters to themselves – groups which actively fought against the Bolsheviks until at least 1924. Many Tajik, who had been discriminated against by dominant Uzbek for generations, fought the Uzbek simultaneously. As for the Uzbek opinion of the Tajik, they have a proverb saying 'When a Tajik tells the truth he has a fit of colic.'

Collectivization in the 1930s destroyed Uzbek and Tajik hopes of independence; a second wave of *basmachi* revolts swept central Asia. But the proud nomads with their tradition of domination now had to submit or to flee: those ethnic leaders who would not accept collectivization and centralization under Moscow were purged and many of the defeated Uzbek, Tajik and others fled to northern Afghanistan and other neighboring countries.

About a million Uzbek now live in Afghanistan, and about six million in the USSR, scattered throughout Soviet central Asia. One quarter of the population of the area, 500,000, live in Soviet Tajikistan. In Soviet Uzbekistan they form over 60 per cent of the population – about five million. Tashkent, the capital, is their great center. Most Uzbek live on collective and state farms in the USSR. The distinctive Uzbek dwelling is a rectangular mud-brick house with a long front-porch veranda supported on columns – a style of house adopted by many Tajik in north Afghanistan. Most Uzbek in northern Afghanistan are tenant farmers where the Tajik are dominant, but the reverse is true in the western extremity of Uzbek distribution of Qaisar and Maimana. Often the Uzbek tenant will pay his landlord up to three quarters of a grain crop.

Where the Uzbek and the Tajik live alongside each other the two groups usually live in separate sections of a village or town and seldom intermarry – although they now do so increasingly in the larger towns and cities. The usual pattern is for a man's first wife to come from his own ethnic group; later wives can come from other ethnic groups.

As with the Tajik, Uzbek cuisine owes much to Iran. But the Uzbek, incongruously enough, have a whole range of pasta dishes including a soup resembling minestrone, *ash* (a noodle dish sometimes mixed with yogurt) and *ashak* (ravioli filled with meat, cheese or leeks). Pasta cooking may have been introduced from China, or from Italy, both at the ends of the great Silk Route of trade between ancient Cathay and the classical Mediterranean world during the first five centuries AD. The Uzbek also cook *munto*, a steamed meat dumpling, probably originally a Tibetan dish.

The classic central Asian bazaar exists in the Muslim areas of the Soviet Union as well as in northern Afghanistan. Town bazaars are usually held one or two days a week. Some towns actually bear the names of bazaar days, and when the Russians renamed Stalinabad, the capital of Tajikistan, they chose the pre-revolutionary name of Dushanbe, which means Monday, the former

Muslims pray in Samarkand despite Soviet disapproval. Far more ancient beliefs – magic, shamanism – survive today among them.

(Center) The valleys of the Hindu Kush provide water and pasture for the Uzbek and serve as routes for passing nomads in the summer.

bazaar day of the town.

The Uzbek have become bazaar artisans, shopkeepers and caravanserai owners in north Afghanistan. They are goldsmiths, tinsmiths, potters, jewelers and leather workers. However, in the areas where Tajik dominate, the Tajik perform most of this prestige work and the Uzbek have lowly jobs as butchers and ironmongers. Most of the handicrafts are women's work, including spinning wool and silk, embroidery, weaving, tailoring, felt-making and similar crafts.

Nomads and semi-nomads pass seasonally through many of the north-south valleys of the Hindu Kush, but none of the Uzbek are now fully nomadic. Some are seasonal shepherds and farmers and move to nearby alpine pasturelands with the local flocks or to highland wheat and barley fields for the reaping, threshing and winnowing periods each summer.

The Uzbek are all Hanafi Sunni Muslims but, with typically Uzbek disregard for authority and uniformity, retain many central Asian shamanistic and animist beliefs. Shamans can still be found who place themselves in trances and converse with spirits and receive answers to specific questions. Often a man will consider himself the soulmate of a particular animal, usually a horse or mountain goat, which will appear in dreams to warn or predict future events. Black magic exists, practised by witches – usually old women – and their spells may be countered by white magic. Uzbek lay curses on one another by sticking objects in clay or straw dolls. The Uzbek *mullah* is sometimes a combination of a Muslim religious leader, a shaman-diviner and a white magician. Even during the periods of the most virulent anti-religion campaigns in central Asia, the resident Uzbek never gave up Islam, and underground *mullahs* held services for the faithful.

Uzbek women, like their Tajik neighbors, prefer clothing made from brightly colored tie-dyed silks or Russian chintz in flowered designs. The men usually wear brightly embroidered waistcoats or vests, and the pajama-type clothing popular over most of Afghanistan. The Uzbek men's clothes were originally designed for their nomadic herding life. Their boots for walking and working are of open boat-shaped leather shepherds' shoes laced with home-made string or leather thongs. Several other types of boots are worn, such as horsemen's boots cut above the knee with hard soles and high heels. Their clothes reflect their central Asian origin and most things are quilted for winter wear (and often worn by modern Tajik as well), such as a long-sleeved coat of many colors draped over the shoulders; women sometimes drape one instead of a veil over their heads when visiting friends outside their own compounds.

Games often characterize a culture (baseball for the Americans, cricket for the British, soccer for the French). For the Uzbek the game is *buzkashi*, though other people of north Afghanistan – especially Turkomen and Tajik –

Uzbek opinion of their close neighbors and ancient enemies the Tajik, is expressed in the proverb – 'When a Tajik tells the truth he has a fit of colic'

Uzbek women, as proud as their men, wear a *chapan* when they leave their compounds ready to hide their faces from the gaze of strangers.

also play it. *Buzkashi* literally means goat-grabbing, but players now commonly use calves. According to tradition the game developed on the steppes of Mongolia and central Asia where nomadic Uzbek and others are said to have used prisoners of war instead of calves or goats.

At the end of the summer's wheat cycle many Uzbek practise *buzkashi* on the freshly plowed fields. When snow comes the games cease, but the horsemen renew their contests after the spring planting, especially near *nawruz*, the first day of the Afghan year.

The rules are informal. The headless carcass of a calf is placed in the center of a circle and surrounded by the players of two opposing teams, which sometimes exceed 1,000. Naturally only a few *chapandaz* (master players) ever get their hands on the calf. The rest ride spare horses, and from time to time a *chapandaz* darts outside the play and remounts.

Scoring a goal can be simply described, not so simply executed. At a starting signal, traditionally a rifle shot, the first *chapandaz* push their horses rearing and snorting in formation towards the center of the circle. Each man attempts to lift the calf to his saddle. Horse and man function as one being. The sport is dangerous, but serious injuries are rare because of the excellent training of the horses.

After a rider has grabbed the calf, he lifts it to his saddle and secures the calf's leg between his leg and the pummel, and he heads for the turning point, carrying his whip in his mouth. He must circle this pre-determined spot, sometimes two to three miles away, but more often under a mile, then return and drop the carcass inside the original circle or one near it.

The other riders attempt to snatch the calf from any opponent clinging to the carcass. Minor injuries are common as whips flail, striking opposing players as well as horses. For this reason, *chapandaz* wear heavy fur and skin hats and cloaks. When a rider picks up the calf, the action begins anew. Strung out like cavalry after an initial clash of arms, the riders dash across the landscape, exhibiting breathless skill. Teamwork supposedly plays an important role in *buzkashi*, and the game does characterize the main themes in Uzbek culture: close co-operation within a framework of fierce, individual competition. Informal horse racing and local forms of wrestling are also popular.

The Uzbek are endlessly independent and resistant: although they are the minority group in Afghanistan, they are the largest group of Turkic speakers and since the beginning of the new period of constitutional monarchy (1964) the Uzbek have tried to get the Turkic languages accepted on a par with Indo-European Dari and Pashto. The Uzbek have also taken the lead in demanding more regional autonomy for the Muslim Soviet Socialist Republics of Soviet central Asia. The Uzbek are one of the world's minorities which make themselves felt.

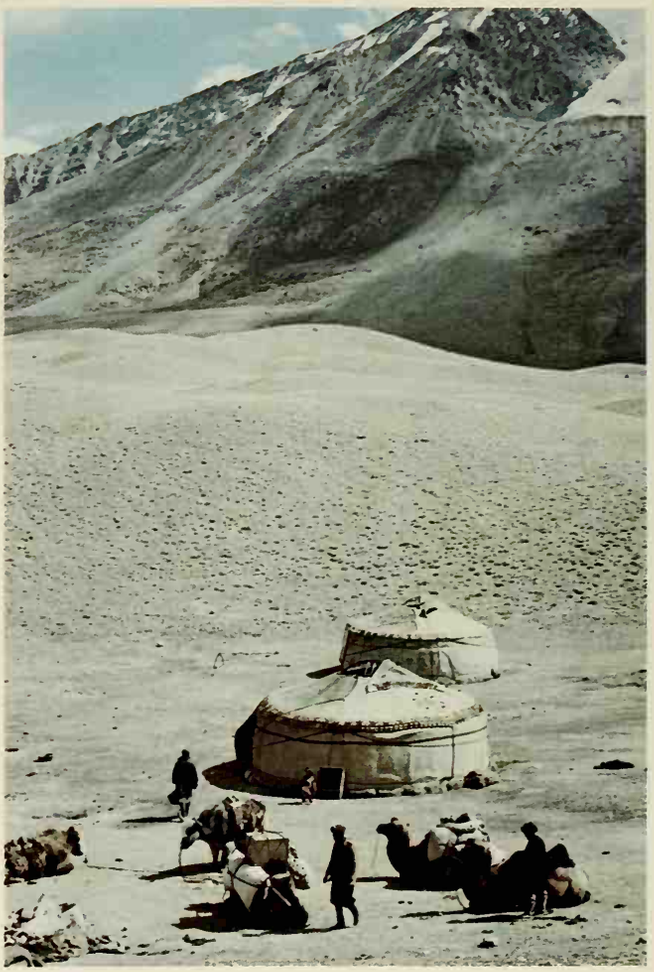
Kirghiz
Soviet Central Asia

The Soviet Republic of Kirghizia lies entirely within the mountain region of central Asia, running from the Tien Shan region in the north-east, to the Alai range in the south. The higher parts of Kirghizia lie above 10,000 feet and are only accessible on foot or on the backs of animals. Here in the mountains there are highland deserts, desert steppe and steppelands which can support little agriculture. Here, traditionally, the Kirghiz people followed the life of nomads, herding horses, yaks, cattle, sheep, donkeys and even camels, ranging through the mountains and mountain passes on yearly migrations to new pastures. Even today, since their land has become part of the Soviet Union which in the early years discouraged nomadism, the Kirghiz have preserved many of their old ways. Their nomadism is now described as 'roving'; but the nomadic family is hardly changed. Collectivization has barely disturbed the old pattern of life which gave the Kirghiz people close ties with each other and in which they were dependent on their herds for most of their needs. Only the raids against oasis settlements and the wars with other tribes which inspired epic poetry and bred heroes are now past.

About a million Kirghiz live today in Kirghizia. There

A Kirghiz boy sits with one of the famed shaggy-haired horses of his people. Horses have always been important to these nomads.

Here on the mountain steppes nomads live in *yurts* – felt covered tents – and graze horses and sheep, goats, yaks and camels.



are also 100,000 or so who live in neighboring Uzbekistan and 30,000 in Tajikistan; still others live in Afghanistan. They share with the Kazak and with other central Asian peoples not only a nomadic way of life but also their Mongol appearance and a Turkic language – the outcome of centuries of intermingling with the tribes who descended on the central Asian steppe.

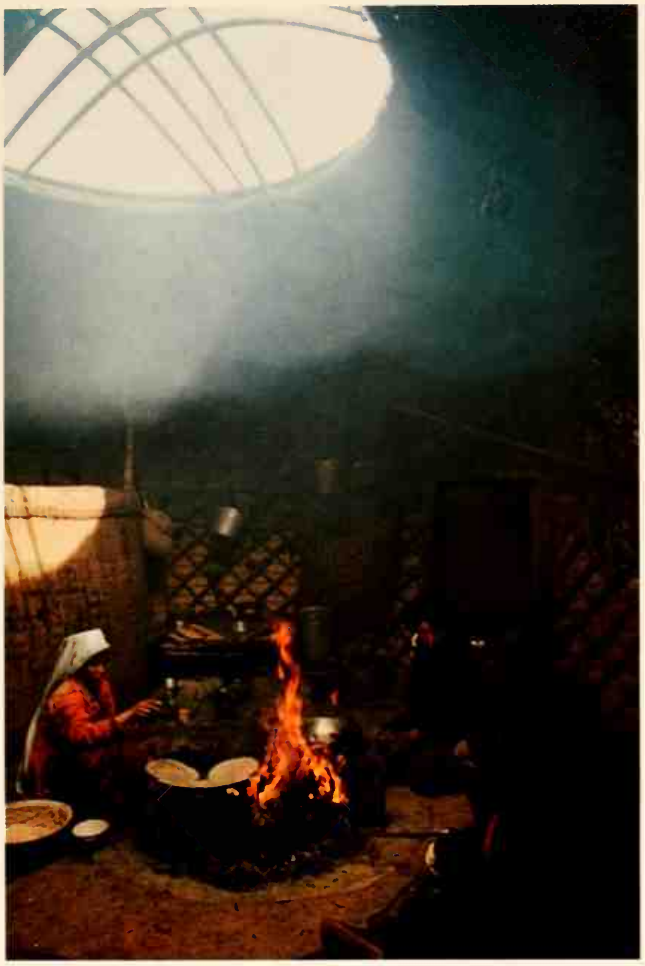
It was only as recently as the 19th century that these peoples had sorted themselves out into six major ethnic groups, each of which represent a mixture of elements – Tajik, Uzbek, Turkomen, Kirghiz, Kazak – and it was largely in relationships with outsiders that they became conscious of being members of an ethnic group. Otherwise the major distinction between them was in their way of life. Either they were sedentary farmers or they were nomadic herdsmen. These two patterns of life have endured in central Asia since prehistoric times. Among both the Kirghiz and the Kazak, horses have always been the center of attention while sheep and cattle are the mainstay of the herding economy. But unlike the Kazak, who were open-steppe pastoralists roaming a hundred miles from winter to summer pastures, the Kirghiz were mountain-meadow pastoralists who migrated only short distances each year.

The Kirghiz have not always lived in the mountains. Originally they lived around the headwaters of the Yenisey river in southern Siberia, and their history cannot really be separated from the history of other peoples in central Asia.

The earliest known inhabitants of the area were of the Caucasoid physical type. Gradually other peoples arrived. Some paused, either for a few decades or for centuries, before moving on. Others remained to blend with the earlier population. It was around the 6th century AD that Turkic tribes began their sweep into central Asia. The Mongols followed the Turks. In the 13th century Genghis Khan invaded the west and set the stage for Mongol domination through his sons. The Mongols who remained in the west, far from their homelands, drew many Turkic tribes into their ranks, with the result that their language became so Turkicized that Mongol speech finally disappeared from central Asia. By the early 16th century Babur, who was descended from Genghis Khan, looked on the Mongols in his army as foreigners with strange customs. The Mongol armies of Genghis Khan and his successors were the last of the great tribal movements which flowed westward through western central Asia for more than 2,000 years.

The nomadic tribes within the steppelands, however, churned around for several hundred years longer. Timur, a Turko-Mongol descendant of Genghis Khan, conquered an empire that extended from China to the Mediterranean. In the 15th century Muscovite power expanded into southern Russia and caused a reverse movement of the Turko-Mongols. The old Mongol empire became divided into the Golden Horde, which

Inside the *yurt*, beneath the smoke hole in the roof, the Kirghiz eat, sit and sleep on the floor with little other furniture.



centered on the Volga river, and the White Horde, which extended eastwards into the steppelands of what is now Kazakstan and parts of southern Siberia. It was in these wars and the later passage of Oryat (western Mongols) as far west as the Volga, that the Kirghiz nomads were driven to the Tien Shan region.

Much of the spirit of those early Turko-Mongol nomads, the struggles and the victories of those turbulent years, can be recalled today in the epic poetry and folklore of peoples like the Kirghiz and Kazak. The heroes, the cultural ideals of honor and prestige, chivalry, love and war, all live on in the legends. There is, for example, a story which tells of the struggle and final victory of the Islamic Kirghiz over the Buddhist Uighur (Mongols) on the Orkhon river in 840 AD:

Like a wild mountain stream we ran down, against the cities we moved, we destroyed the idolatrous temples and laid our excrements on their idols.
At night we attacked them, on all sides we lay in ambush, their locks we cut off . . .
We laid our insignia on the horses . . . against the miserable dogs we flew like birds.
The red flag rose, the black dust rose . . .

A more recent epic song, belonging to the tradition of the Kazak, tells of a hero's single-handed victory over the Kalmuk (the Oriat who had been forced across central Asia during the 18th century). The hero fought for twelve days and nights, and at the end of the twelfth day he and his proud horse present a sad picture:

When he looked at his gray-white horse,
from the hoofs, large as a fire site,
only something of the size of a thimble remained,
of the lips, large as two coat tails,
only the width of two fingers remained,
of the ears which looked like cut reeds,
only a hand's width remained,
of the flowing mane
only a yard's width remained,
of the tail which you could hardly embrace with both arms,
only a handful remained.
When he looked at his own body,
he was wounded in seventeen places.'

It is an epic tradition which inspired passages like:

We shall fight like stallions!
We shall dip the string of the yellow bow
into the red blood,
and we shall draw it until it tears.'

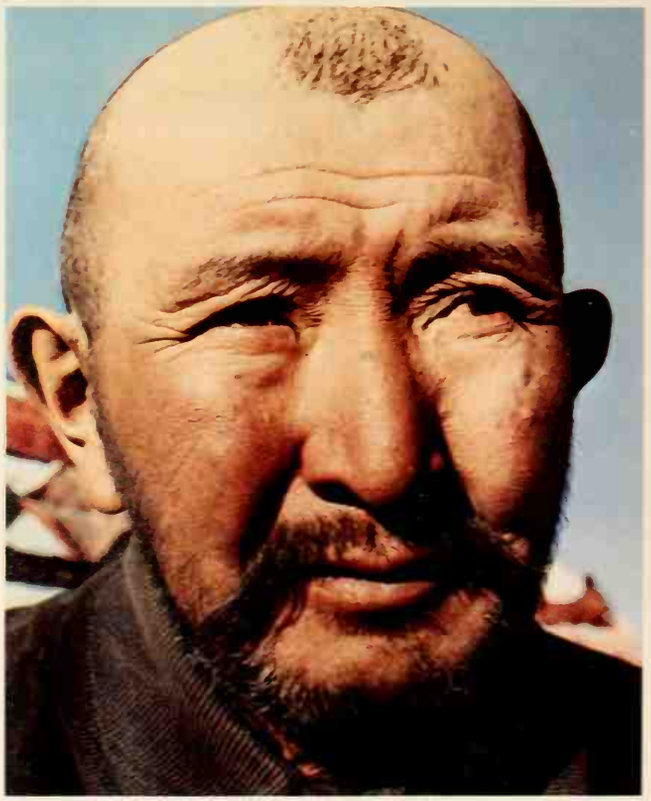
In 1916 the Kazak and Kirghiz rose against a Tsarist decree which drafted tribesmen into the Russian army. There were bitter reprisals from Russian settlers. How many tribesmen were killed or died of starvation through the loss of their animals is not known. But it is estimated that some 300,000 fled to China. An uneasy peace was soon followed by the Russian Revolution when many tribesmen fought against the Bolsheviks. There were three years of bitter fighting before the Russians imposed

Kirghiz nomads have never made very long migrations from winter to summer pastures. Here they ride yaks across the steppelands.

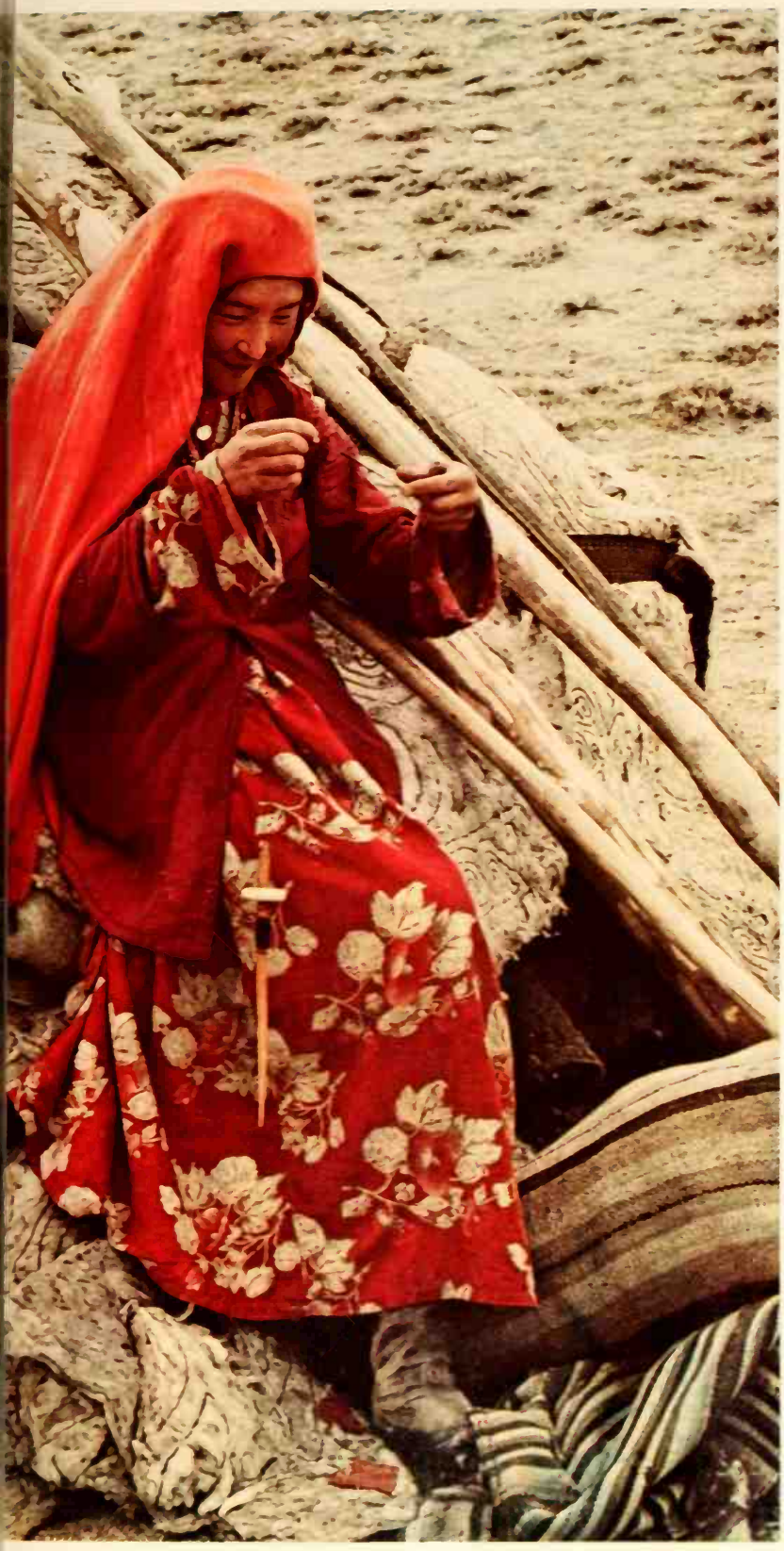
their power.

It was not until 1936 that the republics of Kirghizia and Kazakstan were accorded full status within the Soviet Union. The Soviet government showed very little hesitation in introducing changes. They began with a firm belief that agriculture was a more desirable way of life than pastoral nomadism – and were also aware that nomads were difficult to control. Soviet policy emerged with the intention of settling the nomads as quickly as possible, destroying the tribal kin ties, redistributing both land and animals. Thousands of nomadic families were forced into collective encampments where their animals often starved to death for lack of adequate grazing. Men who resisted were labelled 'reactionary *bays*' and either liquidated or expelled, their animals confiscated. At the same time, mining and industry were developed in regions which had been pasture lands or winter quarters of the nomads.

It seemed unlikely that the pastoral nomadic way of life of the Kirghiz could survive. Yet it has survived. It has even been accepted as the most efficient way of exploiting grasslands, deserts and mountain regions. The herders have now become 'specialists' skilled in the care of livestock. The nomadic family has become a 'brigade' in which each member holds an official title. But they are still nonetheless pastoral nomads. They still move according to the seasons to find pasture for their



Kirghiz folk traditions tell of heroes as invincible as the one who 'when he was four years old already swung the lance of fir-wood'



For centuries, the wood-framed *yurt* covered with felt, has been transported during migrations – and it has always been women's work to erect it.

animals. Although less suited to the extremes of climate cattle are now promoted as more suitable animals for herding than horses.

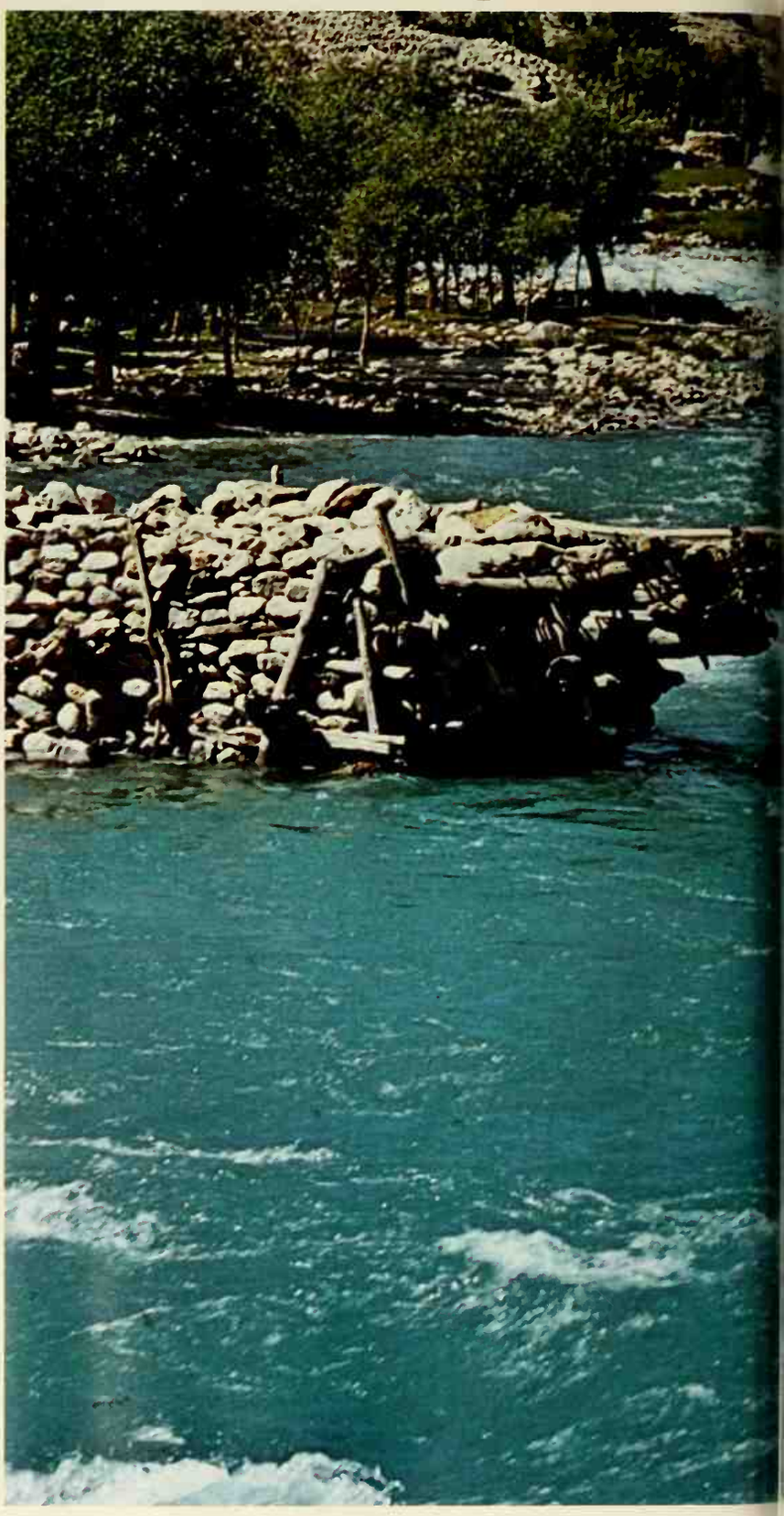
By the 1960s the great drive to settle the nomads of Kirghizia and Kazakstan had passed. There has even been official concern for the welfare of roving herdsmen and their families, or brigades. In 1961 there was a call for the mass production of synthetic materials for *yurts* (the nomads' traditional tent) which would be more durable than the traditional felt coverings and wooden frames. The newspaper *Pravda* suggested that since mass production of synthetic *yurts* had not been organized, some sort of mobile dwelling on wheels might be provided, and the harsh living conditions of herdsmen and shepherds be alleviated by portable gas stoves and warm sleeping bags. This interest in mass-produced alternatives to the traditional – and much preferred – tents might, however, be interpreted as an attempt to control the independent Kirghiz and Kazak herdsmen more firmly.

The collectives, or *kolkhozes*, permit a Kirghiz or Kazak family to own a few animals of its own. In Kirghizia, for example, restrictions limiting workers who were regularly engaged in livestock-breeding to one cow, one milk mare and five sheep have been relaxed – even though on many occasions the collective's animals have been neglected in favor of the herdsmen's own animals. And although each *kolkhoz* usually has a center with a miller, a blacksmith, a carpenter, an elementary school and a cultural club, many of these places have no year-round residents. The regional centers, with all the other services like libraries, schools and hospitals largely serve as links with the rest of the Soviet Union.

The *yurts* in which most of the *kolkhozniks* live from spring to autumn are constructed in the traditional way. As in the old days women make the felt and carpenters make the wooden frame – although carpenters are now paid with money or grain instead of livestock. Setting up and dismantling the tents is also still the work of women. As they have always done, the people eat, sit and sleep on the floor. Different clothes and staple foods are among the changes of recent years among the Kirghiz, especially for those who have turned to industrial work like mining. But for the nomads, or rovers, kinship which was the basis of traditional tribal society has retained its vitality. The *kolkhoz* brigades are still family groups, and the *kolkhoz* itself is composed of members of closely related families. In many places it seems that the tradition by which Kirghiz married only outside this group of closely related families has only been replaced by a new tradition by which members of a family group *kolkhoz* marry only outside this group. Even the Kirghiz miners remember their tribal genealogies five or six generations back. Sovietization, it seems, has not destroyed the enduring spirit of the Kirghiz: 'The hero, paying no heed to the armies which were outside, stormed into the inside of the fortress.'

Tajik

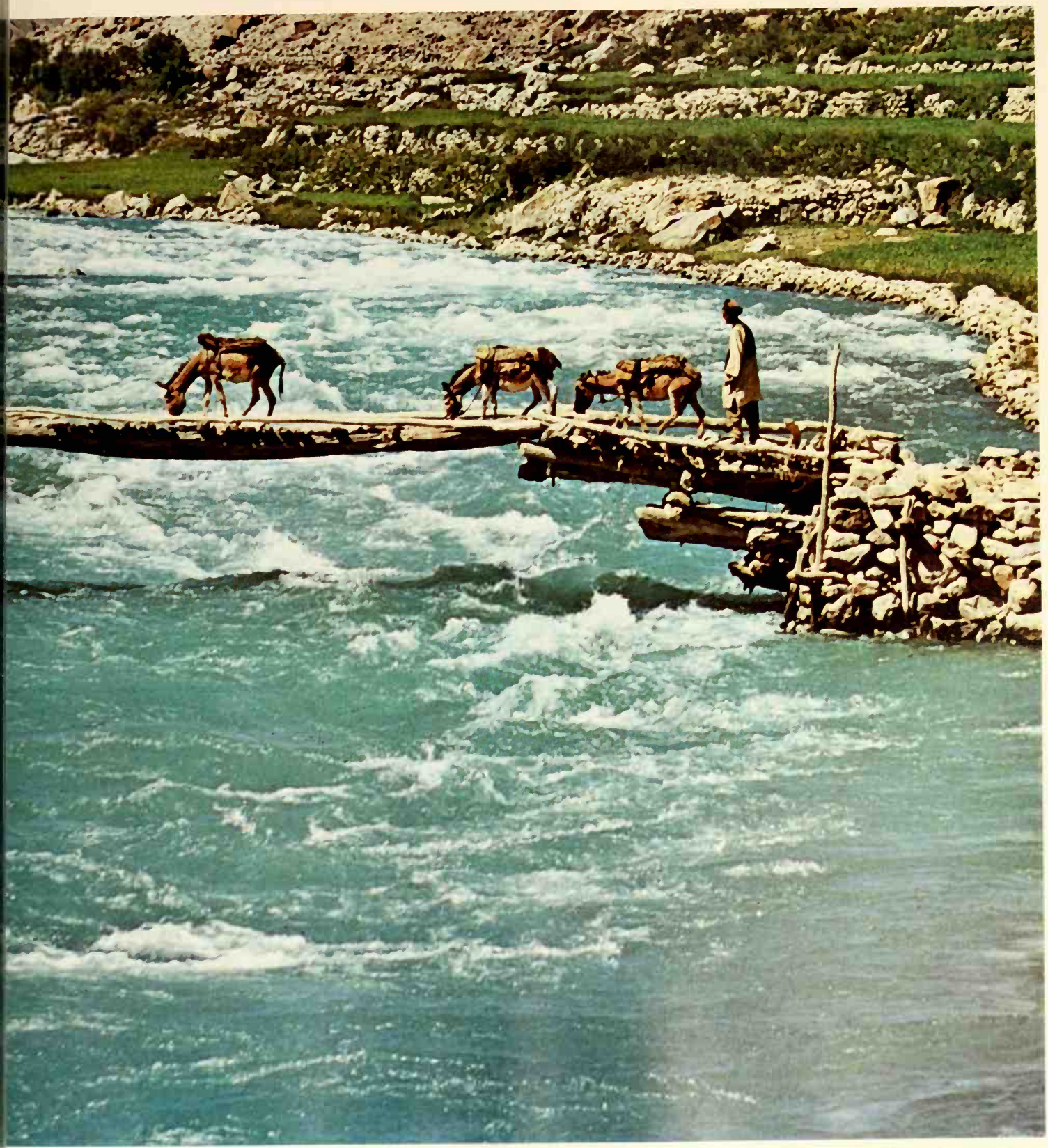
Soviet Central Asia and Afghanista



Tajikistan, on the Soviet-Afghan border, is a land of spectacular mountains. The snow-capped peaks of the great Pamir plateau in the east rise to 22,485 feet above sea level. From the mountains turbulent glacial rivers rush down deep rocky gorges to fertile valleys. This land is the home of about 2·5 million Tajik, whose ancestors have probably been around central Asia since at least the fourth millennium BC.

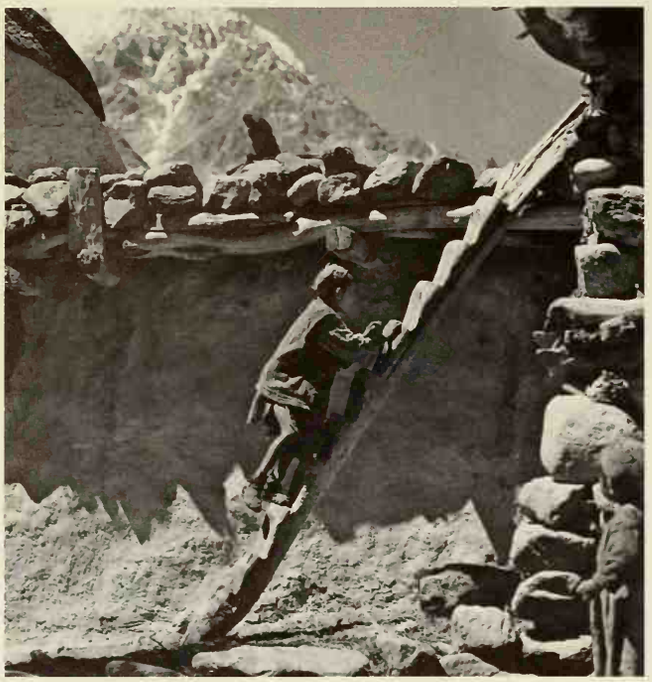
The word Tajik probably comes from the Old Persian term *tazi* which meant Arab. Gradually the term came to refer to all Muslims in central Asia, and was later used to distinguish Persian-speakers from Turkic-speakers. The Tajik themselves, while accepting the name, usually refer to themselves by the name of their valley or home – such as Panjsheri or Andarabi.

They are a Mediterranean people of caucasoid stock, in whom intermarriage with Mongols, especially with the Uzbek, has produced very mixed features, such as a combination of straight black hair, blue eyes with epicanthic eyefolds, high cheekbones, and relatively tall stature. In fact it is often difficult to distinguish them from the Uzbek. Further south, in eastern Hindu Kush toward Kabul, they have fewer Mongol traits.

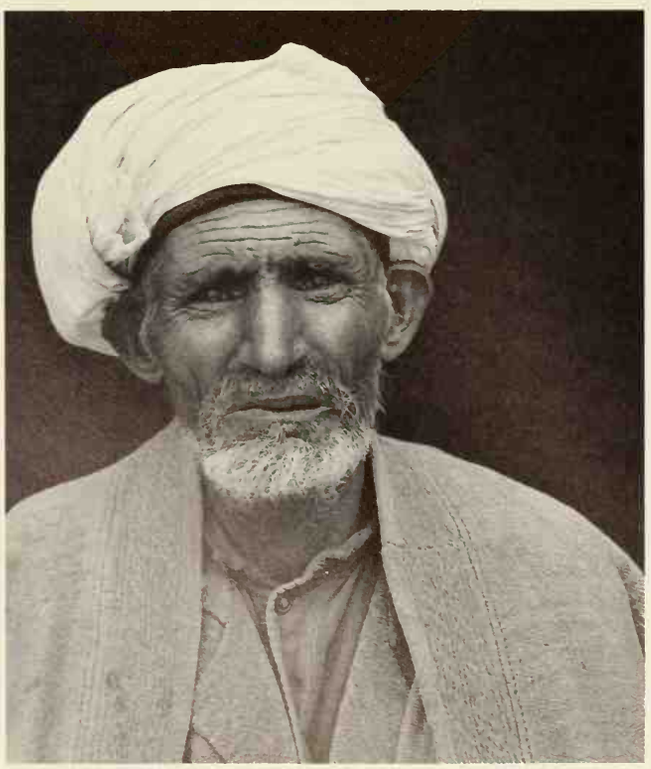


In Tajikistan valleys and orchards are high above sea level. The rushing rivers are spanned by bridges improvised from tree trunks and boulders.

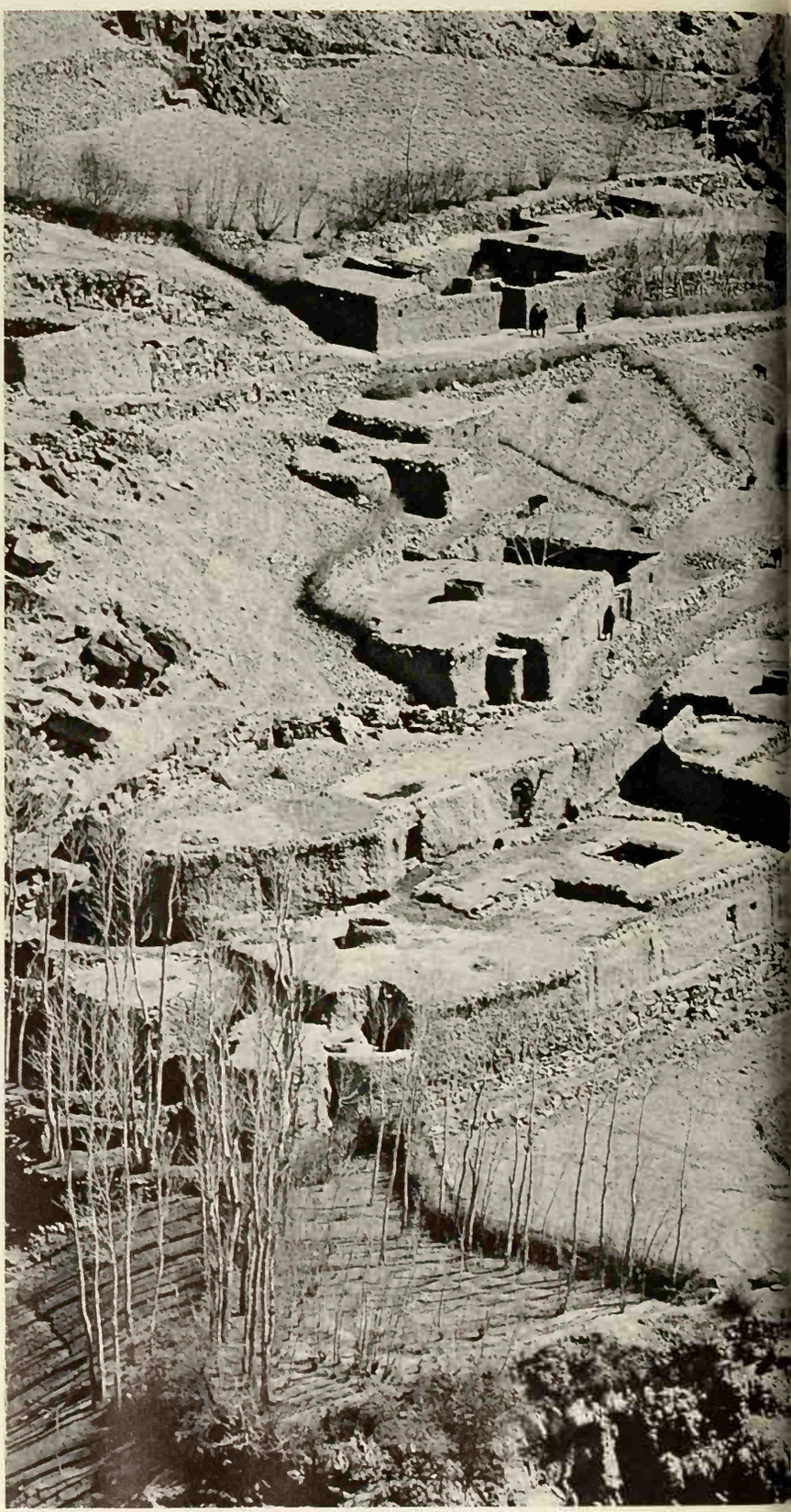
Tajik villages are often surrounded by an outer wall – a relic of the Tajik's history of wars with Uzbek and Central Asians.



(Bottom) The turban is the traditional Tajik headdress. Men's clothing is often a mixture of local and western goods and improvised material.



Kulala village is well known for the pottery made by its women. The more money they make, the more they inlay their wares with gold.



Young Tajik children help at home and mind livestock. As they grow up they join their parents in the fields. The old people mind the babies.

They live across a tract of land which stretches from Chinese Sinkiang, through the Wakhan Corridor and Badakhshan, across the foothills and plains of Afghan and Soviet Turkestan, and up into the mountainous Tajikistan and neighboring Soviet Republics. They are the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan – about 2·5 million to the Uzbek's one million. About 4·5 million Tajik live in the USSR. Only about half of these live in Tajikistan; the rest are scattered.

There are three distinct Tajik areas in northern and north-eastern Afghanistan: Badakhshan and the eastern Hindu Kush, Wakhan and the central foothills and plains of Afghan Turkistan. Only in the first two are there still relatively pure Tajik villages with minimum Turkic linguistic and Mongoloid physical influence. The Tajik speak Persian dialects of the great Indo-European language family. Their modern language probably developed from Arab influences on the Iranian Dari in the 9th and 10th centuries AD. Today the few Tajik who can read or write use Cyrillic script in the USSR, and a modified Arabic script in Afghanistan.

Along the easily accessible Afghan foothills leading to the Turkestan plains Tajik and Uzbek have intermingled a great deal, with the Tajik dominant towards the east and the Uzbek towards the west. In the north Pushtun and Baluch nomads and villagers have also intermingled with them. There are, as well, other groups who move through the mountains seasonally, call themselves Arab and speak an Arabicized Persian; most are ethnically Tajik.

Tajik and Uzbek certainly cannot be distinguished from each other by their clothing. The Tajik wear the distinctive, embroidered turban caps of the Uzbek, and the Uzbek wear those of the Tajik. The influence of whichever group dominates locally tends to be strongest. Both Tajik and Uzbek men wear long-tailed cotton shirts which slip over their heads and button at the right shoulder over wide-waisted, pajama-like pantaloons. They tuck the shirt in at the waist when they are working. They wear local sandals, often made from old automobile tires, or embroidered shoes or, increasingly today, Russian-made rubber overshoes and boots. As much of the second-hand clothing of the western world ends up in the bazaars of Afghanistan towns and cities Tajik often wear sports coats or suit jackets with their pantaloons. Most popular are surplus uniform jackets, especially of the British forces.

Tajik women, however, wear traditional clothing of floral cloth and the famous tie-dyed cloth of central Asia, little modified by the influence of the west. Most Tajik women who live in the country wear head shawls which they draw coyly over their faces when strangers approach. Few wear the *chaudry*, a sacklike garment which completely covers the body from head to toe. Only limited vision is possible when they wear this, through an embroidered lattice work, which is usually worn by women who have had extended contact with the urban world. The veil and isolation of women (*purdah*) were originally city customs of the Byzantine Christians and Sasanian Persians which were adopted by the conquering Arab Muslims as they became urbanized.

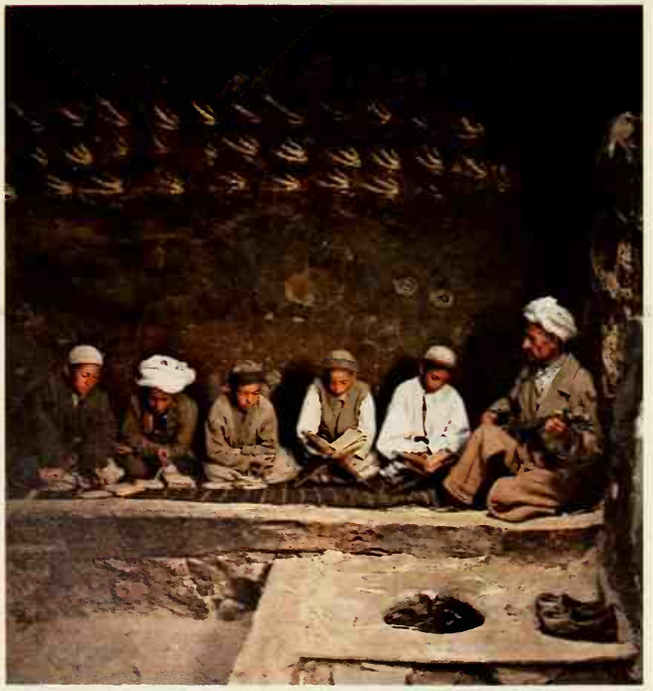
The Tajik areas are mountain oases, north-south valleys separated by passes. In broad lower valleys the Tajik practise dry agriculture growing wheat, barley and millet. Where the foothills meet the plains some irrigation (including underground tunnel-canals) is possible and here they cultivate onions, cucumbers, turnips, carrots and eggplants in irrigated fields near rivers. And nearer to the village farmers cultivate fruit and nut trees in well-watered orchards: mulberry, apricot, apple, peach, fig, almond and walnut. The wheat and barley are harvested in the summer; the vegetables in late summer and the fall. The higher valleys are mainly alpine pastureland for summer grazing.

The Tajik in Soviet central Asia have been more widely dispersed than those in Afghanistan and subject to the great pressures of collectivization and russification, which have weakened, though by no means shifted, their culture. Their basic economy has changed from subsistence farming to large-scale cotton farming, but there are still privately owned and maintained garden plots and the bazaar is still an important feature.

In many Tajik areas of Afghanistan more than half the families own their land. Tenant farmers, often Uzbek in Tajik-dominated areas, and Tajik in Uzbek-dominated areas, work under modified systems of land tenure. The landlord and tenant supposedly get one fifth of a crop for each of the five elements donated: land, water, seed, draft animals and labor. However, a good tenant farmer on a long-range contract will seldom get less than half

Rock drawings are evidence of the Tajik's ancestors of 4,000 B.C. Then as now the agile ibex was the hunter's favorite prey.

(Bottom) Soviet and Koran schools work side by side, but education has hardly improved since two generations ago when few Tajik were literate.



of a crop. This system often revolves around mutual agreement and respect rather than exploitation, though it does not always work so equitably in areas where one ethnic group is dominated by another.

For the Tajik, as for all western and central Asian peoples, lightly leavened bread is the staff of life. The Tajik are fond of eating goat and mutton which they make into *korma*, a stew with vegetables, or as kebab, meat cubes threaded on skewers and then cooked over a charcoal fire. Occasionally they also eat chicken and beef and, more rarely, camel. They kill these animals by cutting their throats. This makes the meat *halal* – clean; animals not butchered in this way are *haram* – unclean and forbidden. For breakfast a Tajik farmer usually eats only bread which he dips in green or black tea. And for lunch or dinner he will very often eat *shurwa*, a thick meat and tomato soup eaten with side dishes of meat. He eats rice, either local or imported, with most meals. The Tajik are also fond of yogurt, dried curds, curds boiled in butter or in the fat from the tail of a fat-tailed sheep, and other dairy products. However, vegetable oil from India, Iran and Europe is replacing animal fats in many places. Like all Muslims, the Tajik eat using only the right hand. People eat from a communal dish or platter while sitting cross-legged on the floor or on a high wide wooden bench.

The Tajik's houses reflect a mixture of Irano-Afghan plateau and central Asian influences. Nearly all Tajik live in rectangular mud-brick or *pisé* huts built inside a walled compound. The more eastern Tajik families, however, prefer domed bee-hive huts.

The Tajik and Uzbek also use the *kherga* or *oôee*, a kind of portable tent, for two purposes. During the warm months many Tajik put up *kherga* and live in them as summer huts. And farmers – who with their families, donkeys and camels move to their highland fields for reaping, threshing and winnowing – also use the *kherga* as a home until the end of the agricultural cycle in late summer.

In Tajik families it is the women, helped by grandparents and older paternal aunts and uncles whose active working lives are usually over, who are responsible for bringing up and disciplining children. Fathers pamper their sons and daughters. Older children help to look after the younger ones and by the time a child reaches eight or nine, he or she is expected to watch over the family livestock as well. By their early teens boys are working full time with their fathers and girls with their mothers.

Early in their teens Tajik children get married – usually to a relative or to a local person. The Tajik prefer their sons to marry cousins, although they often have to accept more distant relatives. Some Tajik men do marry Uzbek women, but this is looked on with disfavor. The boy's family gives his bride's family a specified number of sheep and goats. In return the girl brings complete sets of clothing and household goods to her new home. This is an exchange rather than a bride-price: the bride's family in compensation for losing labor gains livestock.

It is at mosque schools, where they exist, that young Tajik receive formal religious training. Although government-sponsored secular schools have, since World War II, become increasingly important in the cities and larger towns, few have reached the villages.

Most Tajik are orthodox Sunni Muslims, although the

Although Tajik hunt ibex with rifles, anything they kill must have its throat cut to be clean enough for Muslims to eat.

Pamiri groups are mainly followers of the Aga Khan and local beliefs permeate Islam. Wany shrines (*ziarat*) to Muslim holy men are obviously pre-Islamic and sometimes even prehistoric in origin. Although in principle saints are forbidden in Islam they in fact proliferate, and brotherhoods arise around some shrines. Here amulets are sold which guarantee everything from curing rabies to fertility in sterile women. Some Tajik, although they seldom talk about it, believe in witches and witchcraft. Old women past the menopause are most liable to be suspect. Some *mullahs* admit that they know of counter-rituals to the black magic of the witches.

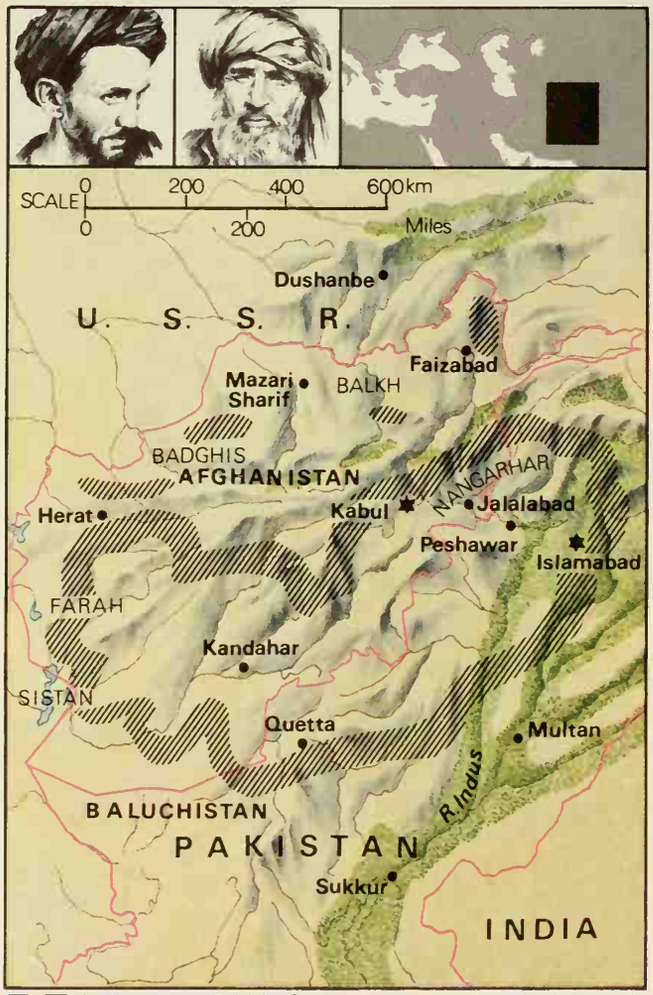
Certain groups of Tajik claim to be descendants of the prophet Mohammed, through his daughter Fatima and his nephew Ali, who many non-Arab Muslims believe is buried in Northern Afghanistan, not in Iraq. For the Tajik who live in Soviet central Asia Islam survives as a way of life although most of the Five Pillars have been abandoned.

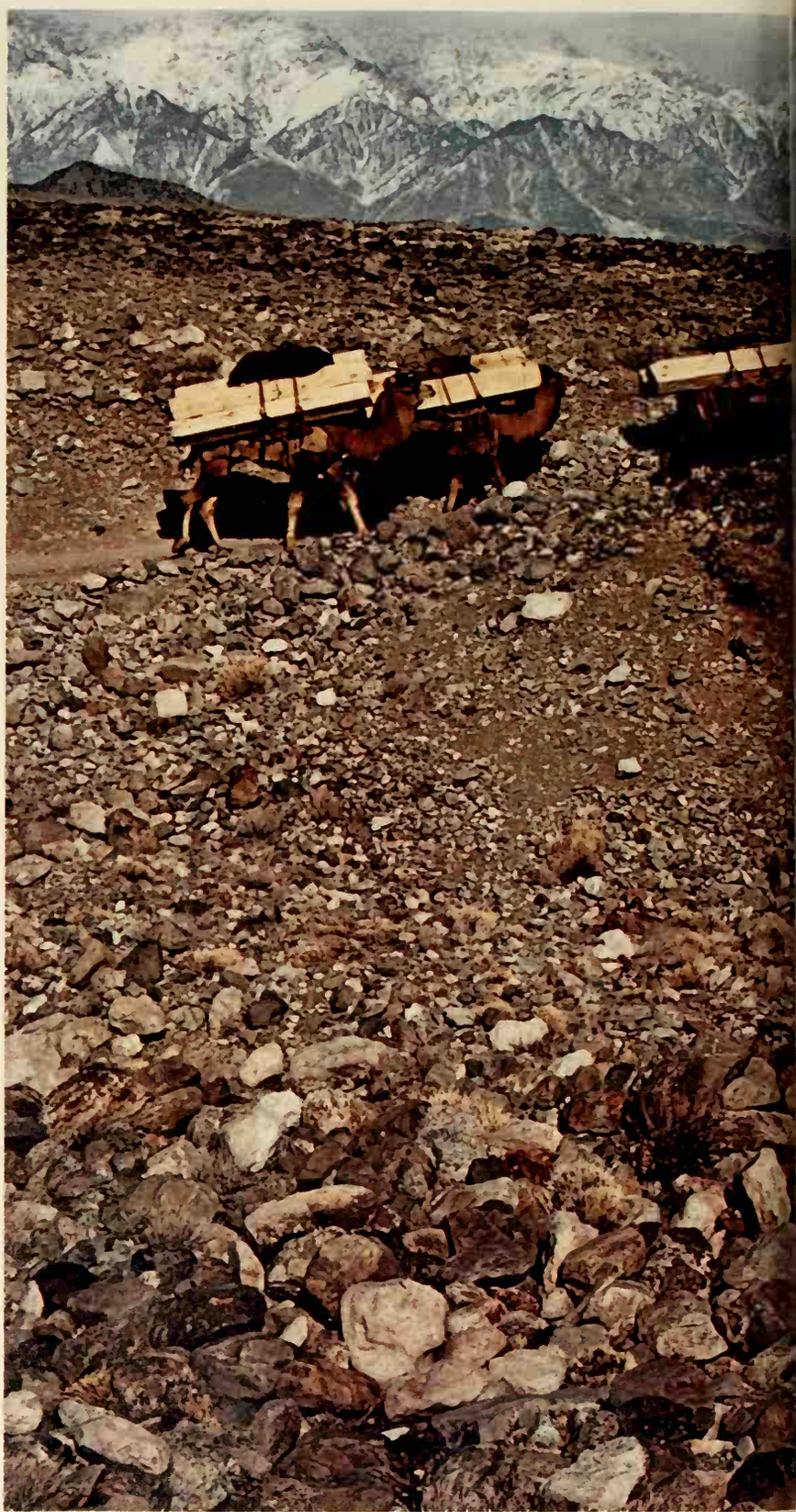
In the rural world of the Tajik, formal entertainment, except for the ceremonies of birth, marriage and death, is rare. National holidays, the Afghanistan Independence in late August, for example, and various revolutionary celebrations in the USSR, are becoming popular and are replacing the more traditional end-of-harvest festivals. To the Tajik music is important, both in work and play. They sing folk-hero songs, songs ridiculing other groups, and love songs – some with homosexual motifs.

Homosexual and extramarital affairs are very common. As adulterous couples may still sometimes be put to death if they are caught – thus removing two economically and biologically functioning individuals from the group – adultery is usually met with a blind eye.

Tajik villages are generally governed by councils made up of the heads of all the traditionally important families. The council of elders, who are often called 'White Beards', effectively insulates the villagers from the outside world, which constantly tries to develop or exploit their rural way of life. In many areas in Soviet central Asia and in Afghanistan, when young men return home after serving in the military or working on development projects and new industrial complexes, a new informal power group has developed. This sometimes includes members of several ethnic groups – Tajik, Uzbek and Pushtun – and competes with the extended family and each of the ethnic groups for loyalty. Out of these new groupings grow workers' unions and political parties.

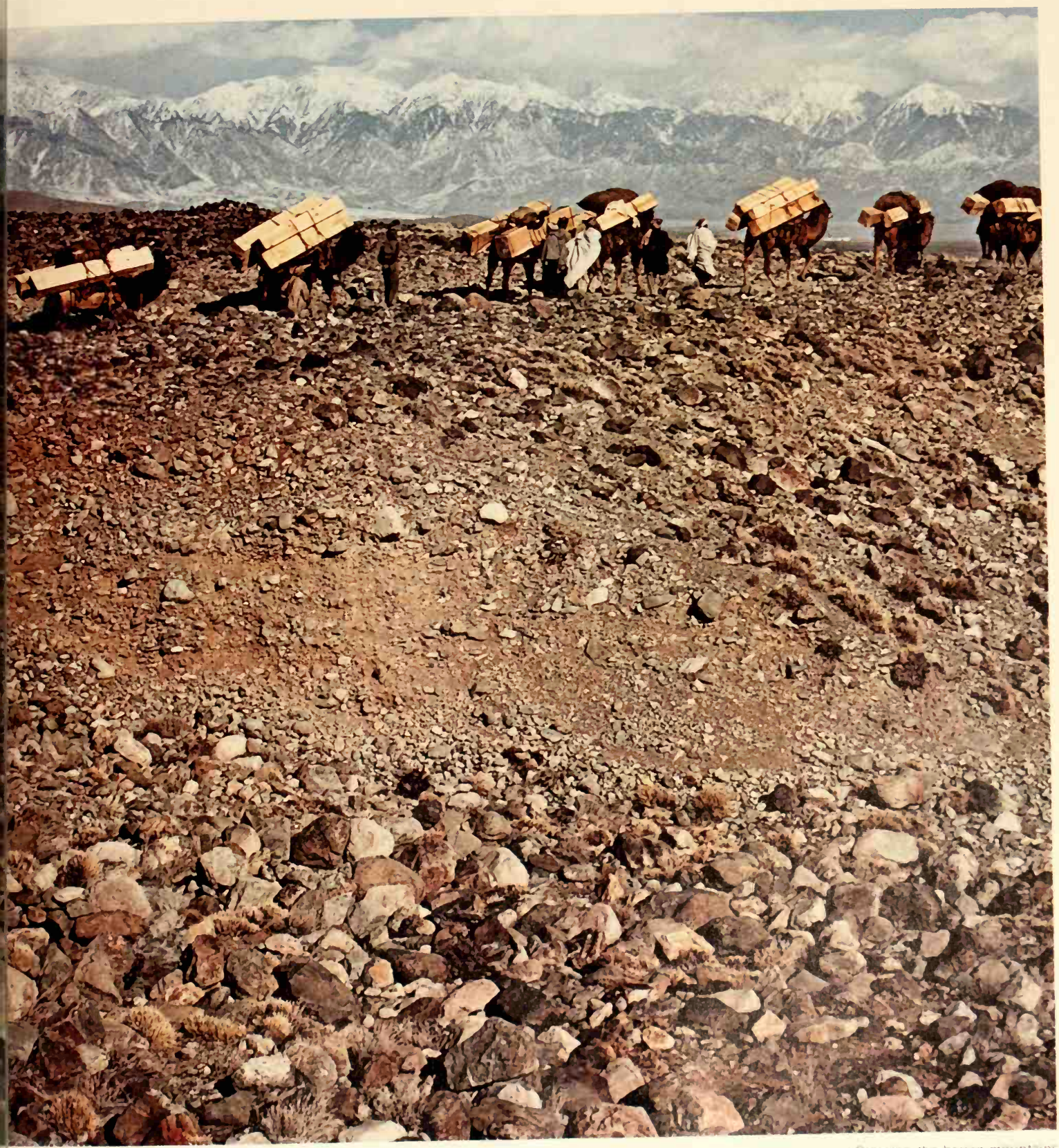
Kabul and the Pakhtun
Afghanistan





Kabul, over 5,000 feet above sea-level, is made beautiful by the contrast of its rich gardens and fertile fields with the barrenness surrounding it and the backcloth of high mountains on the sky-line. 'The climate is delightful and in this respect there is no such place in the known world' wrote the Mogul emperor Babur long ago. Once it was a walled city close to the Kabul river and protected by mountains, swamps and its magnificent citadel, the Bala Hissar. And once its capture was a vital step to the conquest of Hindustan.

Now Kabul, essentially a cosmopolitan city, is thriving and expanding. Its houses and industrial areas stretch into the surrounding farmlands and grazing areas. Kabul and countryside are merging as more and more people move in. It has 450,000 inhabitants and more are coming all the time. There is no proper old town in Kabul and few old buildings. In 1842 its famous covered bazaar was destroyed by the British in retaliation for the slaughter of an entire military force during the first Anglo-Afghan War. The traditional town center has, since the end of the 1940s, been gradually replaced by new roads, squares, parks, grand government buildings, hotels and shopping



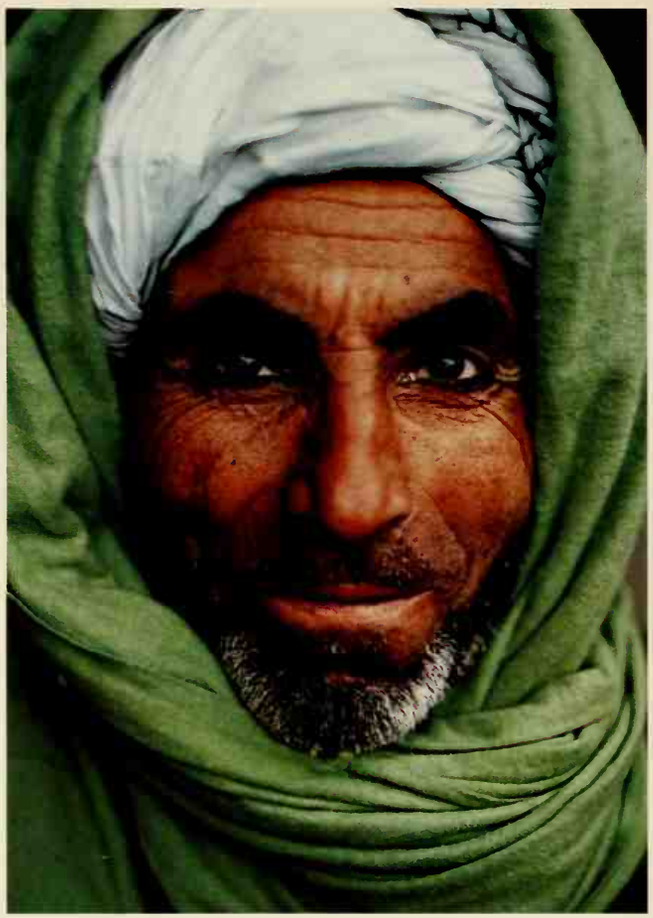
Crossing the barren mountains which surround the gardens of the city of Kabul are caravan routes to India, Iran and Turkistan

centers, cutting through the remnants of the old town.

Wandering through Kabul one comes across small restaurants where tea is always available, bakeries where flat wheat loaves are made and sold, butchers, fruit and vegetable sellers, milk and cheese shops and street hawkers. The traditional bazaars are open streets lined by single-room shops, with 'serais' or courtyards behind. At one time there were covered streets. The older shops are usually just a single square room open to the street by day and shuttered at night. The old craft workshops are the same. There are additions to some shops like glass windows, doors, tables and chairs, so that they range from the purely traditional to the truly modern as might be found in any western city.

But Kabul has kept its own characteristics from earlier times and earlier purposes. There are still specific quarters for the different peoples living there. The Qizil Bash and the Hazara, both of whom are Shi'a Muslim, live in one area while the Chandawul, the Hindus and Sikhs live in another. Both these areas are on the edge of the city where most activities are dominated by Tajik, who are Sunni Muslim of the Hanafi sect, the state religion. There are different quarters too for coppersmiths, silversmiths, shoemakers, pottery, salt and sugar dealers, for example. The few remaining Jews are cloth dealers and money changers. By tradition the Pakhtun,

The Pakhtun are rugged nomads who live in the mountains of Afghanistan. Their myths tell of their descent from the ten lost tribes of Israel.



the most numerous people in Afghanistan, are not city dwellers at all. In Kabul their jobs are connected with their old caravan and transport occupations, so that they dominate lorry transport and mechanical workshops. They are now becoming more influential under the Pakhtunization policy of the government. Merchants and craftsmen are organized into bodies rather like guilds. They have elected leaders representing them to the city council. The artisans too, have guilds, and each trade has a saintly character as patron or *pir*, the founder and protector of the trade.

Traditional houses in Kabul are built of sun-dried bricks and are one or two storeys high. Towards the street bare walls are broken only by a wooden door, protruding pipes for waste and rainwater and a niche from where sewage can be emptied. Down the street runs an open ditch, a hazard to pedestrians. Occasionally a beautiful carved window opens from the guest-room on the first or second floor towards the street. Otherwise all the houses are entirely inward orientated towards the courtyards where the women are busy working.

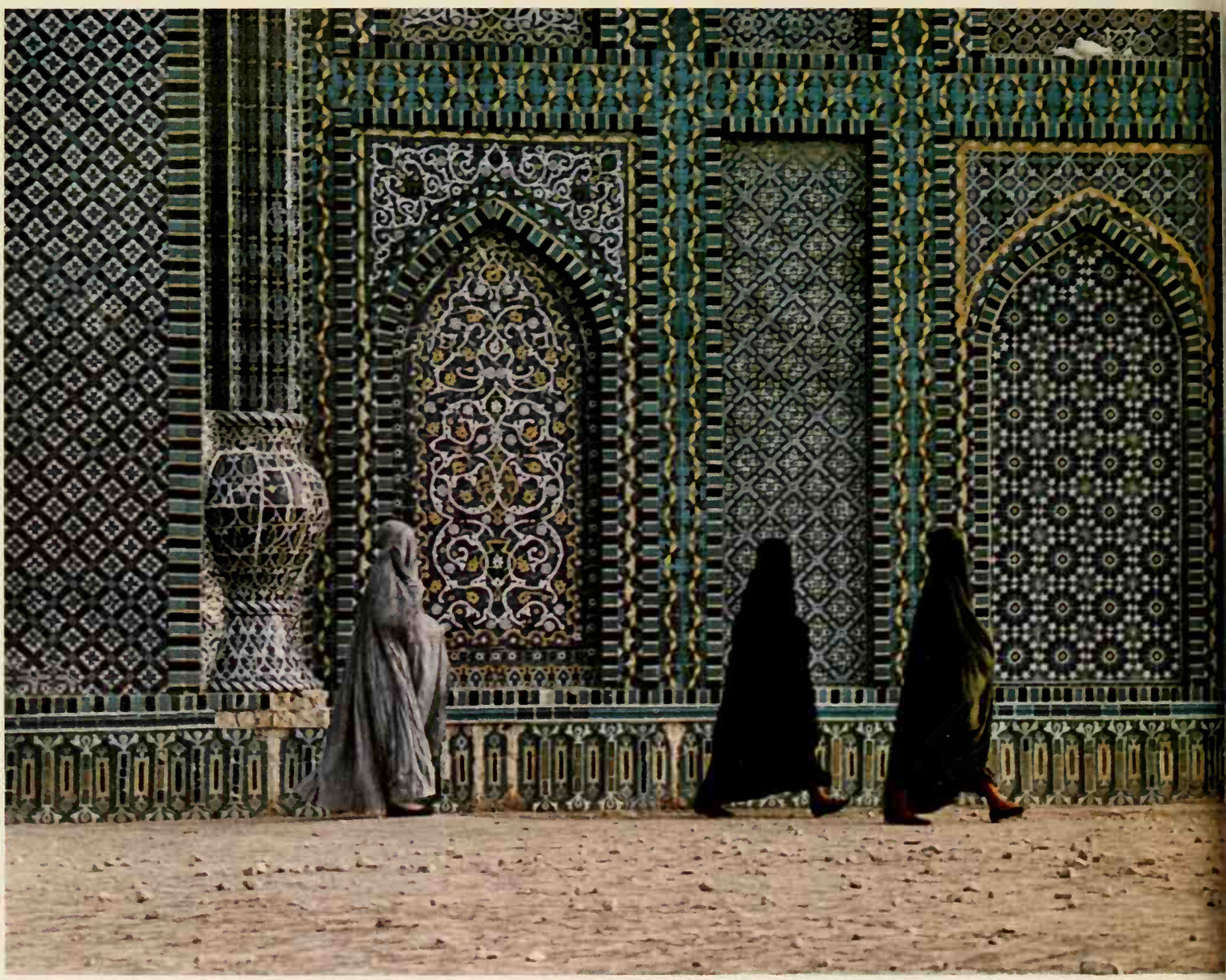
This inward-orientation of the houses corresponds to the old ideal of the seclusion of women, so that the house walls and the *chaudry*, the outdoor veil worn by women,

Russia, China and Britain have all been involved in conflicts and wars centering on Kabul. This cannon dates from the Afghan wars, 1848.

(Top) The famous covered Chahr Chatta bazaar was destroyed by the British Army in 1842. Many shops and stalls have since been rebuilt.

Qizi Bash and Hazara live in one part of Kabul – Chandawul, Hindus and Sikhs in another. Smiths, cobblers and potters have their special quarters.

Mazar-i-Sharif is famous for its spectacular mosques. The Sunni Muslim population worships at the Shrine of Ali, son-in-law of Mohammed.



Centuries of constant wars and feuds have given Afghan soldiers high prestige. The 80,000-strong army is now equipped by the Russians.

serve the same purpose. But in 1959 it was decreed that unveiled women might be seen in public. Before this only applied to some of the tribal people and female servants. Consequently since 1959 women have increasingly entered the man's world. More women are being educated and some now hold top jobs including ministerial posts in the cabinet. As women become liberated so the house walls are gradually becoming lower and lower as one moves into the new parts of the city. In the modern apartment buildings it is impossible to build a wall which would serve the old purpose of keeping women hidden.

In a household there is either just husband, wife and children or it may be an extended family including their

In the boutiques of Kabul wealthy women buy fine shoes and stockings; outdoors they will be modestly concealed by their heavy veils.

The capture of Kabul was an important step in the conquest of Hindustan. The riverside districts always suffered the heaviest war damages.

close relations as well. On the floor of a one- or two-roomed house are plaited mats and rugs. A quilt with a couple of cushions is arranged along the walls for sitting on. Sometimes an oven heats the house or else there is a *manqal* which is a kind of pan holding hot charcoal and placed under a small table covered by a quilt. People sit around the table with their feet under the quilt.

The modernization of Kabul and Afghanistan causes problems. Traditionalists on the one hand, and modernists and even revolutionaries on the other tend to be mutually opposed. Imported goods and ideas bring in a variety of new cultural manifestations and values, while at the same time the old ones are still viable. Cultural conflicts result and these often become personal. Students, for example, often find a double cultural heritage, one in the capital and another when they return to their country homes.

Kabul has not always been a mere city. At one time it was synonymous with all Afghanistan. The 'Kingdom of Kabul' has been described in what is in many respects an unsurpassed account by Mountstuart Elphinstone, published in 1815, after his stay in the Afghan King's winter capital, Peshawar. Before the British arrived Kabul was much larger even than present-day Afghanistan. It included what is now the North-West Frontier province and the northern Baluchistan area of Pakistan. It had dependencies as well: the Uzbek-inhabited Balkh, the Aimaq and Hazara regions, Herat, Sistan, Lower and Upper Sind, Multan and the Kashmir.

The Pakhtun people in Iran and other neighboring countries are usually called Afghan. They are called Pathan in India and Pakistan. The real founder of modern Afghanistan was a Duranni, Ahmed Shah, who became king in 1747. His son, Timu Shah, moved the capital to Kabul in 1776, and it has since then been the seat of the Duranni kings, who are sometimes known as *Amirs*. This change in the position of the capital was important for Afghanistan's future. It was no longer in the midst of internally competing and quarreling Pakhtun. It was at the edge of their country in a densely populated oasis, peopled by Tajik. Furthermore it was even then a flourishing commercial town which controlled the most important road and caravan routes connecting India with Persia and Turkistan. It was a cosmopolitan city, where the ruling language was Tajiki or Persian, known today as Dari. The Pakhtun kings found in the Qizilbash, the Turkish-Persian troops left behind by the Persian king Nadir Shah, reliable soldiers and competent administrators. The state machinery became Persianized. This was probably vital for the consolidation of the Afghan state and may be the background for the multi-ethnic city of Afghanistan today, where the Pakhtun influence has recently been regaining its strength through an active national policy.

The Pakhtun are the biggest ethnic group in Afghanistan. They number 7 to 8 million people. In east Afghani-

The game of buzkashi is a test of virility and horsemanship played with a goatskin, filled with sand, weighing over 150lb.

The skin is placed within a chalk circle. Two opposing teams on horseback attempt to pick it up by the limbs and carry it to the goal line.

stan they live roughly south of the Kabul river, east of the Kunar river and east of a line drawn from Kabul to Kandahar, from where some 6 to 7 million extend into Pakistan, in the areas west of the Indus, and into northern Baluchistan. Their country is mountainous and rugged. Towards the east it stands like a wall overlooking the Indus lowland. Towards the west it gradually merges into the high barren mountain plateaux, leaving the Nangarhar-Laghman and Khost fertile lowland behind as remnants of the Indus lowland. The climate is dry subtropical in the lowlands and dry temperate in the highlands. In both areas there is a low rainfall in winter and steppe-like grasslands. Between are mountains exposed to the Indian summer monsoon rain, with magnificent forests of fir and cedar.

Most of the Pakhtun are settled farmers but on the traditional subsistence level and they use less than 10 per cent of the total land area. There is room for nomad sheepherders, called *kuchey* or *powindah* (pages 100-111) too. The Pakhtun farmers grow as their main crops wheat, maize, barley and sometimes rice, and in east Afghanistan grapes, apricots, peaches, cherries and pomegranates. The Pakhtun have rarely engaged in crafts and trading. They had few cities and those that were there were dominated by Hindus and Sikhs in the east and by Tajik in the west. But recently, as a result of the ongoing Pakhtunization policy in Afghanistan, they are coming to the cities as administrators and govern-

The rules of this wild game vary: often the riders carry short lead-tipped whips in their teeth with which they lash out at their opponents

ment employees.

Lower Laghman is a heavily populated fertile plain on the fringes of the Pakhtun area 18,000 to 24,000 feet above sea-level where farming is entirely based on irrigation from a tributary of the Kabul river. Here the Pakhtun are still expanding and establishing themselves as the dominant class of landowners. Tajik and Pashai – an old Indian-speaking people, largely confined to the mountain valleys – have various subordinate jobs in the villages. Lower Laghman was once dominated by a single Pakhtun tribe but now there is hardly a tribe which is not represented there. The old tribal political system is now mixed with feudal bureaucratic allegiances towards the administration of the province and Kabul.

Looking across the country one might see fortified castles or *qalas*, either standing alone or surrounded by the clay houses of the landless farmers. Once these forts with look-out towers served purposes rather like medieval castles. One would also see compact villages where the farmers live. These villages had no electricity or kerosene machines until the late 1960s.

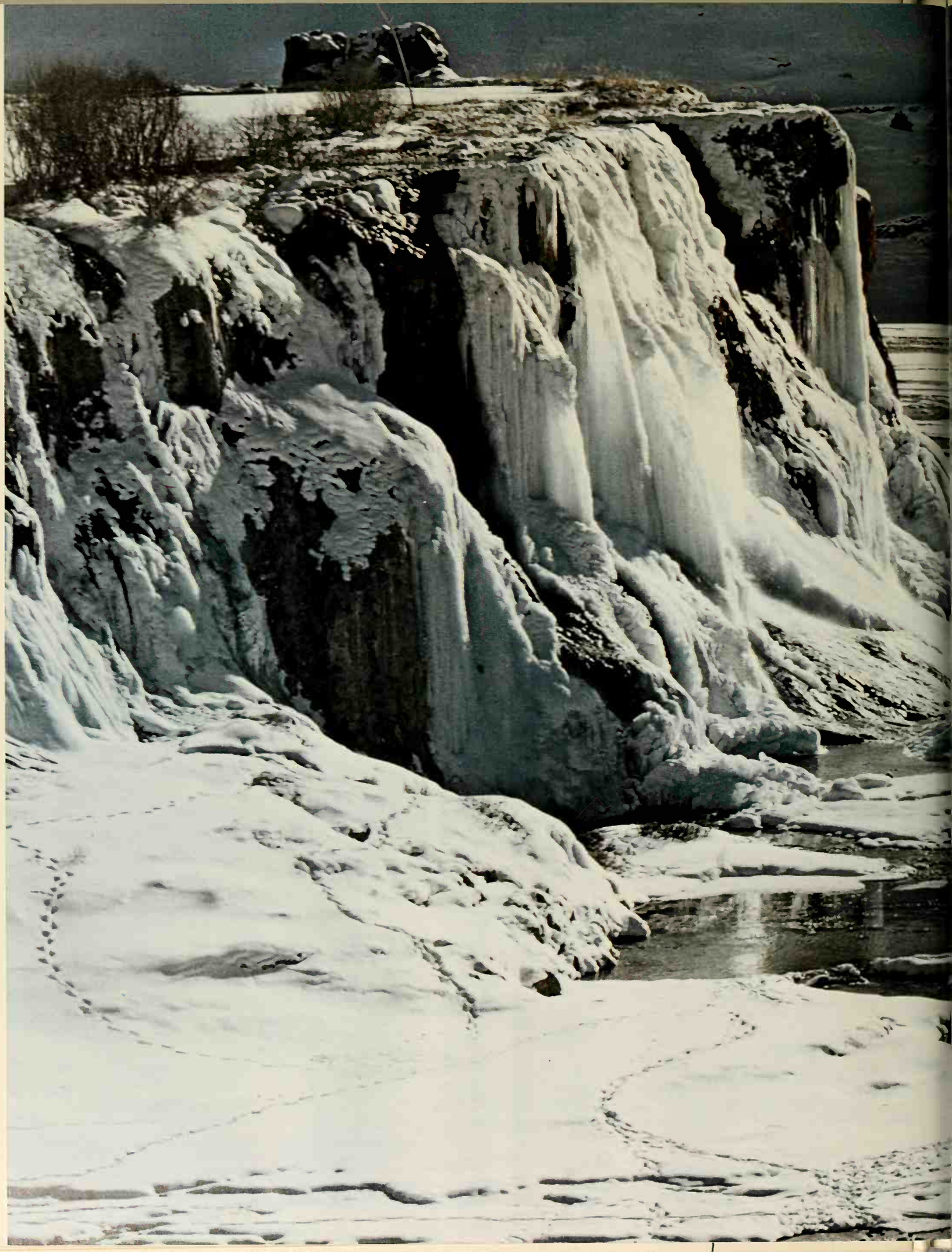
Let us enter one of these villages in late winter and see what is going on. As we wander through the narrow streets bordered by houses built around open yards, we are led, being strangers, to the house of the most important man, the *malik*. He is the elected leader of the village who deals with provincial government. Inside we find other visitors already sitting in the guest room. Tea and sweets are served by the *malik's* son and his brother's son. They are all talking about local politics and after our interruption they carry on. Two big landowners who are competing and fighting for power in the valley are discussing which of them is to be invited to a coming village wedding. In the evening an enormous chicken and rice dish is served. Next morning we peep into the inner yard, where women are busy churning butter, by rotating a quirl-stick in sour milk. Later on we wander through the village. Next door is a carpenter, a Tajik, whose main job is to make and maintain all wooden parts for agricultural implements in return for a share in all harvested crops. His wife is just milking their only cow, while it licks the skin of a calf stuffed with straw. This trick makes it easier to milk since its calf has died. Out in the street a group of nomads with asses loaded with fire-wood for sale are coming in from their winter camp close to the nearby mountains. At a water channel on the outskirts of the village is one of the two mosques with a big platform in front, the village school for boys. The teacher is the *mullah*. Close by in an open square is the village's only shop, kept by a Tajik. He sells tea, sugar, needles, kerosene, matches and other necessities. Next to him is the barber. He works outside. For seven kilos of each harvested crop he will cut a man's hair for a year. He is a Pakhtun, but first he is a barber, which actually means belonging to a kind of occupational caste. He has other important jobs as well. He pulls teeth and performs

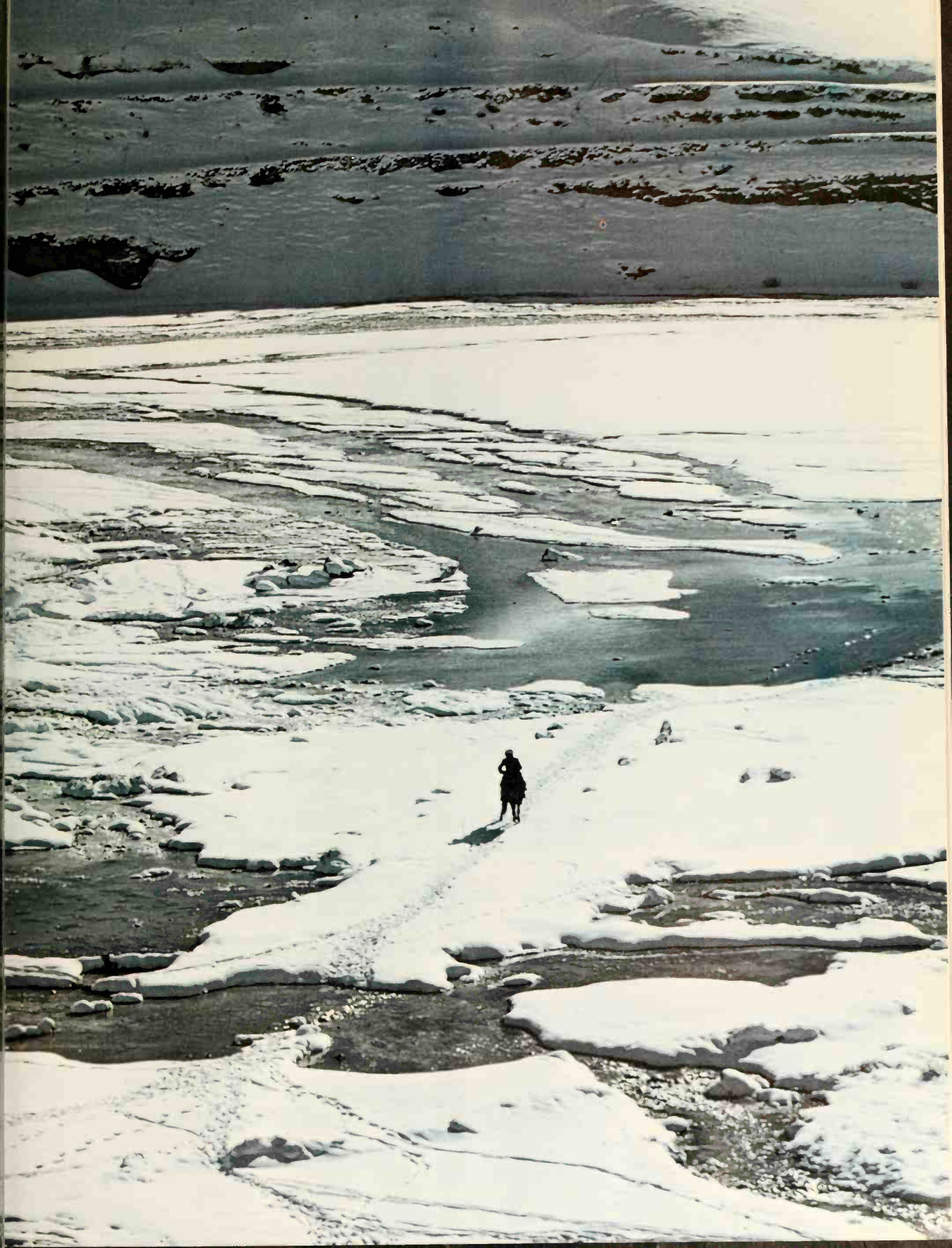
Competitive sports of all kinds appeal to the people of Kabul. Dog fights are especially popular and often end in the deaths of both animals.

(Center) Large sums of money are wagered on the favorite to win this cock fight. The birds are bred and trained to draw blood and kill.

The ultimate competition is face to face wrestling. Not only a sport, it is sometimes the substitute for a duel – a means of settling feuds

(Over page) The hilltop lakes of Band-i-Amir are among the wonders of the world. In winter they are even more remarkable as the waterfalls freeze





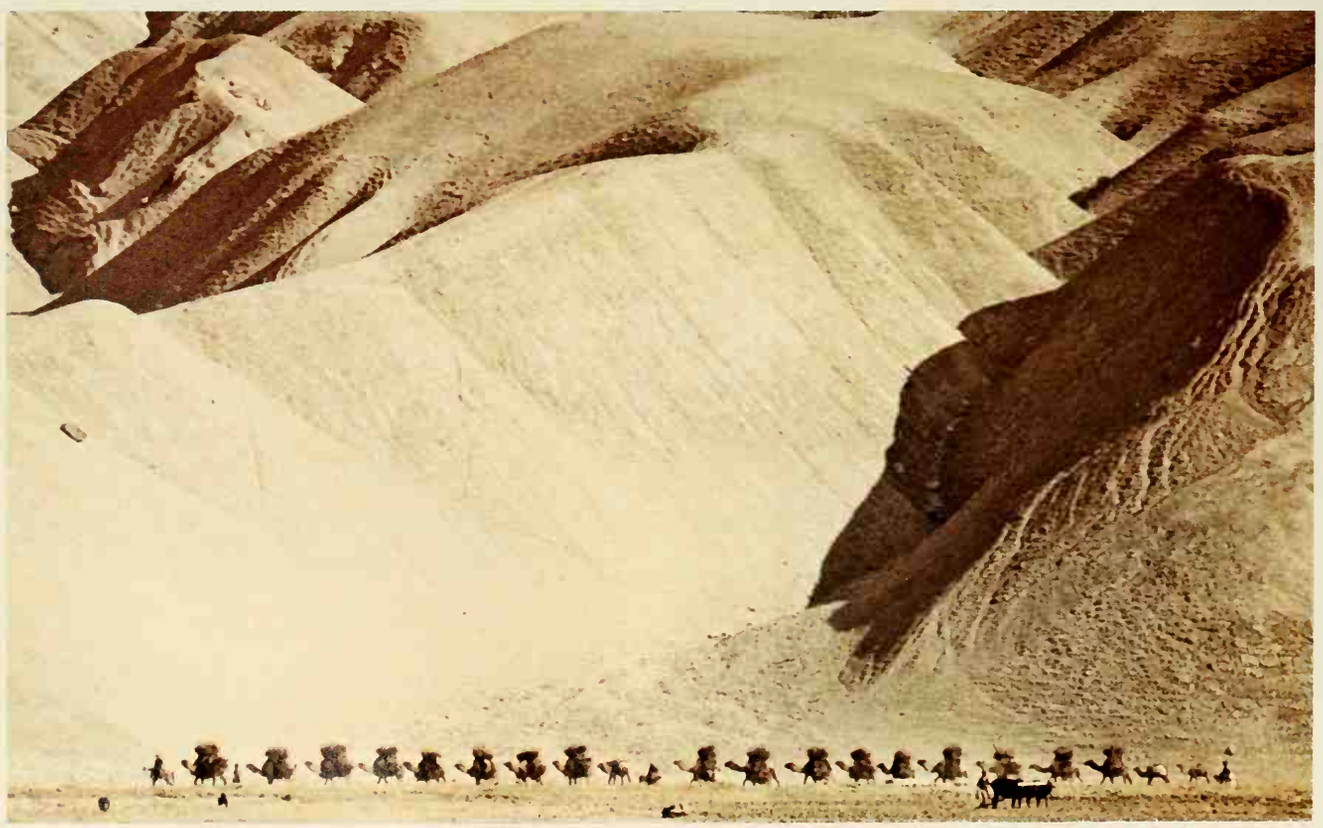
bleeding operations. He plays music and dances at weddings and he cooks for festivals. His wife is the village midwife, the fount of information on marriageable girls.

At the other end of the village the smith – a Tajik – works with a small boy puffing the fire with his bellows. He has to maintain all iron parts for agricultural implements for a share of the harvested crops, like the carpenter. Both carpenter and smith will repair the mills for extra payment. Out in a fallow field the weaver – again a Tajik – makes his coarse cotton cloth, for which he is paid one fifth of the finished material, plus an amount of corn. A little further away itinerant weavers from Wardak have just arrived after a month's stay in the nearby nomad camp. They are specialists in heavy woolen and goat hair material for tents, transport bags and other heavy goods. As poor semi-nomadic people with few animals and little land elsewhere they are guests for the winter. They stay as *hamsaya*, or subordinate outsiders, getting free accommodation, but being paid nothing for minor services. They are only paid in cash for repairing walls and roofs.

We have only the mills still to see now. There are ordinary horizontal water mills for grinding wheat, rice or maize, and there is the stamp-mill for husking the rice after a special parboiling treatment, which is done in the surrounding *qalas*. If we had visited the village earlier in the winter we would have seen the sugar cane processed and boiled down into brown sugar.

The Pakhtun are named after an ancestor from their father's line of descent. Their name bears either the suffix *khel* meaning 'group' or *zai* meaning 'son of'. Those with the same surname form descent groups which can ideally all be fitted into a common genealogy going back to a saintly warrior of the 7th century whom the Prophet named Abdur Rashid. The members of a descent group, whether nomads or farmers, hold equal rights to land from their common forefather. (Nomads acknowledge a forefather more distant, perhaps as much as 15 generations ago, but farmers may acknowledge a forefather of only four generations back.) The rights to land held by all members of a descent group are for grazing, farming or collecting wild fruits and timber. Formerly the land belonging to the descent group was redistributed every few years so that no farmer always had the worst land. The ideology of equality based on common descent is important in all dealings with Pakhtun society.

It affects the political area of their lives. Leadership is not hereditary but is built up around men with the right personal qualities. A leader must be a sober judge in human affairs, able to speak well in public, wise over tribal matters, straightforward and brave. He will gain followers if he is generous and gives protection. He will find it easier if he is wealthy and can use force. There are usually several competitors for leadership, each with their own band of followers. These rival leaders may well



During winter and spring floodwaters sweep away bridges along the unpaved road from Bamiyan to Band-i-Amir, making the trip dangerous.

Several men attempt a precarious crossing of the River Pech in a raft made from six cow skins and overloaded with carpets and provisions.

be from the same descent group for heredity is no guarantee of cohesion as in many African chiefless societies. Leaders can be constantly kept in check in the village councils or *jirga*. At these meetings all adult men can express their opinions and may change their allegiances according to the behavior and opinions of the leaders who are vying with each other for followers.

In Pakhtun society there is a strict code of honor – *pakhto* – which all are expected to maintain. A Pakhtun is expected to retaliate against offense or injustice regardless of cost or consequence. He is expected to offer 'guest friendship'. This means he must receive, feed and protect by every available means anyone who comes to his house, even an enemy. The guest is temporarily accepting his host's authority and superiority. If he continues to accept

Where high-walled villages and narrow streets provide little space for animals and people, roofs become the logical place for them.

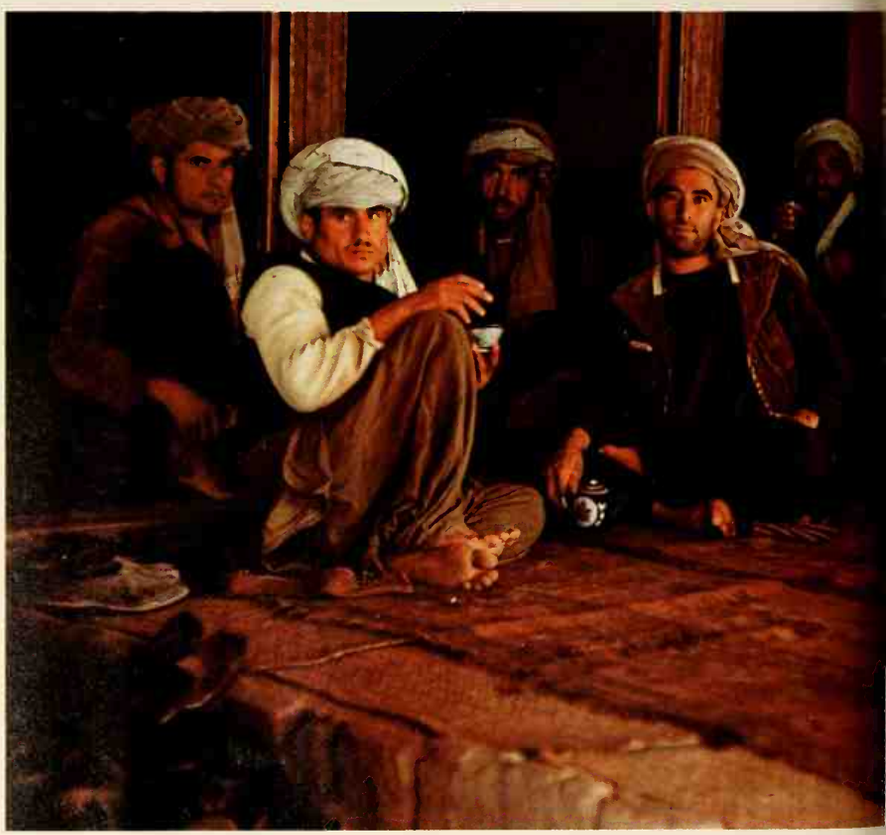
In the interest of hygiene as well as comfort the men of Kabul keep their heads shaved all summer long. It is a busy time for the city's barbers.

Tashkurghan is a small mountain village where life has not changed for centuries. On market day men bring their flocks to sell and barter.

hospitality he is politically dependent on his host. If the host in return accepts hospitality from the guest he is not superior but an ally. In this way political alliances are cemented. Despite his obligation for revenge a Pakhtun must also be ready to forgive. He must always receive a peace messenger and listen to what he has to say.

There is a system of compensation in disputes between men, known as *pakhtunwali*. Compensation is considered in terms of units or *khuns* One dead man equals one *khun*, a dead woman equals half a *khun*. Loss of a tooth, finger, ear or eye varies between a tenth and half a *khun*. Compensation must be paid in relation to how many *khuns* have been lost. It is often paid in women. For instance a woman might be given in marriage without her family receiving the bride-price due to them. But it is sometimes paid in cash or in kind.

Pakhto, besides being the code of honor Pakhtun must uphold, is also their language. It is *Pakhto* in both senses that unites the Pakhtun. According to a local saying a Pakhtun is one who does *Pakhto* and not merely speaks it.



The men of Tashkurghan spend long hours in tea houses, which women may not enter. The cups and teapots are imported from Russia and recently from Japan.

On special occasions Pakhtun women put on their traditional finery. The embroidery, coins and beadwork enhance the features of the tattooed face

Chahar Aimaq
Afghanistan

Afghanistan is often called the 'cross-roads of Asia'. Khurasan is the center of that cross. Khurasan which today is a Persian province in the north-east of the country included, before the establishment of the border between Persia, Afghanistan and Russia in the late 19th century, parts of Afghanistan as well. The armies of the great conquerors have throughout history marched through Khurasan. Some left destruction. Others just passed through en route to bigger conquests elsewhere. In the tribes of Khurasan today can be seen the imprint of Alexander the Great, of Genghis Khan, of Tamerlane, of the Mogul Emperors, the Persians and Turks and of the White Huns and Arabs. As a result the ethnic make-up of the inhabitants is probably the greatest admixture of people anywhere. The largest group of tribes in Khurasan is called the Chahar Aimaq.

Of the Chahar Aimaq, or Four Aimaq – although there are usually more than four tribes included under this name – the most important are the Timuri and the Taimanni. Other Aimaq tribes include the Firuz Kuhi, the Jamshidi and the Baghdis Hazara. The many small tribes still maintain something of an individual identity although, to protect themselves from more powerful tribes such as Turkomen in the north or Baluch in the south, the smaller tribes have linked up through alliance and marriage to larger Aimaq groups. By religion the Aimaq tribes are, like most of the population of Afghanistan, of the Sunni faith of Islam. Most people in Persia are Shi'a Muslims.

The rural peoples of Khurasan tend either to be nomadic herdsmen or settled farmers. Most of the population combines both activities. The nomads are sheep and goat herders who use the mountain pastures in spring and summer, and the foothills and valleys in autumn and winter. The way of life of the tribes living in these mountain regions has persisted for centuries despite innumerable political upheavals in the area.

19th century history in Khurasan shows a struggle between Britain, Russia and Persia for control over the area. The role of the local tribes in this struggle has been a complicated and turbulent one. The issue of protecting the British route to India was only important to them when their own pasturelands and security were threatened. During the Anglo-Afghan wars the Aimaq tribes were weakened as powerful autonomous political units. With the final establishment of the Persian-Afghan-Russian border in the late 19th century they found themselves divided between the three countries, although most remained in Afghanistan.

The last population estimate of the Aimaq was made in 1815 when they were thought to number about 400,000. Today they are thought to number about 250,000. Many live all year round in black goat-hair

(Above) The country of the Chahar Aimaq is barren and mountainous, and the semi-nomadic tribes have always competed for the thin pasture.

For some Chahar Aimaq nomads, a *yurt* is a spring or summer dwelling. Some, like the Firuz Kuhi, however, use this kind of tent permanently.

(Center) The *yurt* has a circular stressed wooden frame, draped with felt, and bound with decorative, woven goat-hair braids.

Among these tribes, any attempt at government control is bound to be complicated by nomadic movements and the system of clans or *taifehs*.

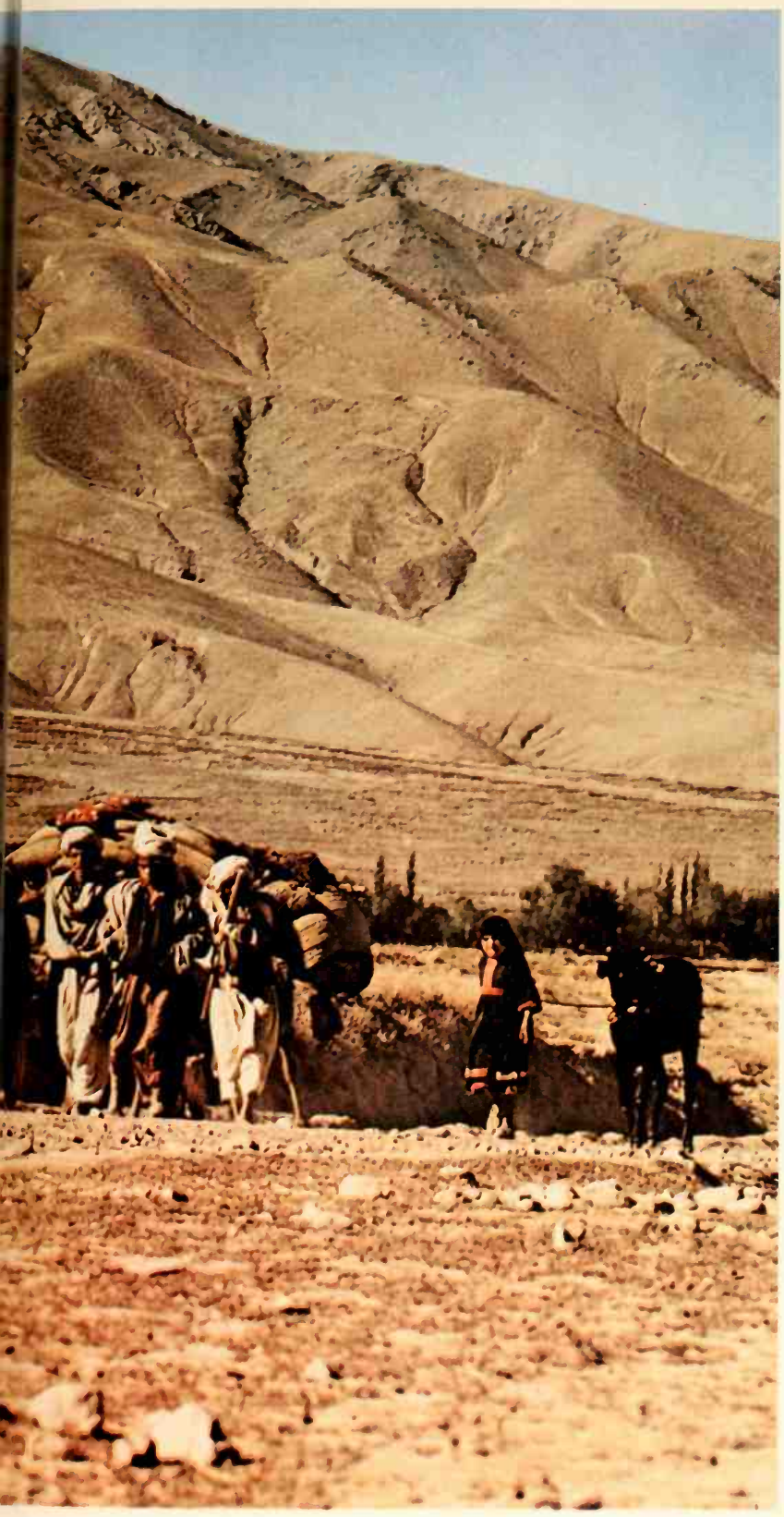
tents or, in the case of the Firuz Kuhi and some Taimanni and Baghdis Hazara, in *yurts* – light structures with a wooden hooped frame and covered with felt tied by woven goat-hair braids. A large proportion of the Chahar Aimaq however live in permanent domed village houses and only use their tents or *yurts* in the spring and early summer.

Yassin Salehi of the Timuri tribe leads a busy life with his three wives, ten sons and one daughter. As *kadkhoda* (village headman) he has in the past been responsible to the government for his village and he is also an important man in the Salehi clan, or *taifeh*.

Yassin has handed over many of his political duties to his third son Ma'sud so that he can concentrate on the administration of his household. With 120 sheep and goats, two cows and fields of melons, wheat, barley and sugar-beet to organize, his hands are full. His life would be easier if all his sons helped. But his eldest son is married with his own small herd to manage. The next has joined the growing numbers of young men who move to towns to find new work and a new life. The third is busy with village affairs. The fourth is at school in the local town. And the others are too young. Next year things will improve. Then he will have had time to recover from the drought that has decimated his livestock and crops. And his daughter Fatimeh will have brought him 30,000 tomans (approximately $3,750) of livestock, seed, money and goods in bridewealth by her marriage to Mohsen Taheri, Yassin's sister's son. Also Yassin has made a good arrangement for spring pastures in the mountains 50 miles to the north of his village. When the five families from his *taifeh* that he camps with arrive for their four months' stay in the mountains they are sure to have enough fresh grassland for the herds. He will keep his herd and his brother's herd together during the spring grazing so that their dogs can jointly provide more protection against wolves. His brother's black goat-hair tent can be used by his sons, thus leaving more room in his crowded tent. His wives have to cook inside the tent. The whole family has to eat and sleep there. With such a large family a second tent will be very useful. Perhaps instead of making the traditional carpets, his daughters and youngest wife can weave more goat-hair material for another tent in the autumn, although it will mean a loss in revenue. He could, on the other hand, hire the tractor and harvester of a *khan* from another nearby Timuri *taifeh* who owes him a favor for the use of his two sons during last year's sugar-beet harvest. Then Yassin could save enough time to go and sell his carpets in the city for much more than he would make locally. His traditional subsistence way of life is difficult but known to him so what saddens Yassin most is watching his people slowly lose their tribal identity as the efficient administrative machinery in Persia draws the young towards a new and in a sense a more 'civilized' way of life.

Pakhtun nomads
Afghanistan and Pakistan

Sheep are the nomad's livelihood. Each spring the household moves to the mountains where summer pastures will fatten the flock.



The central mountains of Afghanistan which form the westernmost extensions of the Himalaya and Karakorum ranges are flanked by vast lowland areas on the north, west, south-west and east. These are the arid steppes of Afghan Turkistan and the Iran and Baluchistan borderlands, and to the east the more fertile monsoon-fed valleys of Pakistan's north-west frontier province, known to the Afghans as Pashtunistan. In these lowland areas and in the foothills by which they approach the mountains, the Pashtun nomads have their winter quarters.

The nomads move in response to the demands of their pastoral way of life and to seasonal variations, migrating between low-lying winter quarters and mountain summer pastures for the sake of their animals. The climate is comparatively mild between October and May, though there may be snow in the north for a month or so. In the steppes and foothills March and April rains bring up abundant grass, but from June to September temperatures regularly exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and May sees a mass exodus of the nomads inland, converging on the mountains of the Afghan interior, which have been under

Nomad girls marry young. The groom's family pays 100 sheep and $725. Most of the cash pays for the trousseau – tent, clothes and household goods.

snow for up to six months. In late summer and autumn they move back to the peripheral lowlands.

The nomads spend the greater part of the year camped in their winter quarters. From September until March groups of up to a hundred families settle near some water source, a river, spring or underground channel.

Of the ten to fifteen million people – half each in Afghanistan and Pakistan – who speak dialects of the Pashtu or Pakhtu language and call themselves Pashtun or Pakhtun (otherwise known as Afghans or Pathan), some two to three million lead this nomadic or semi-nomadic life. The majority of the nomads are of the two great Pashtun tribes of Durrani and Ghiljai.

Not all the various Pashtun nomadic groups are pastoralists. They differ greatly in their customs and circumstances: some specialize in long-distance trading, others sell their labor as harvesters. But the nomads of the west, the Durrani tribe and other culturally similar groups, are almost all sheep-breeders. They live in the area that reaches west from Kandahar to Herat. They are distinguished by speaking Kandahari, the 'soft' dialect of Pashtu, by their dress, their customs and by their tents which differ from those of the Ghiljai and other eastern groups.

Loaded camels do not travel well under a hot sun so the nomads make camp before noon. The young men dance in the hot afternoons.

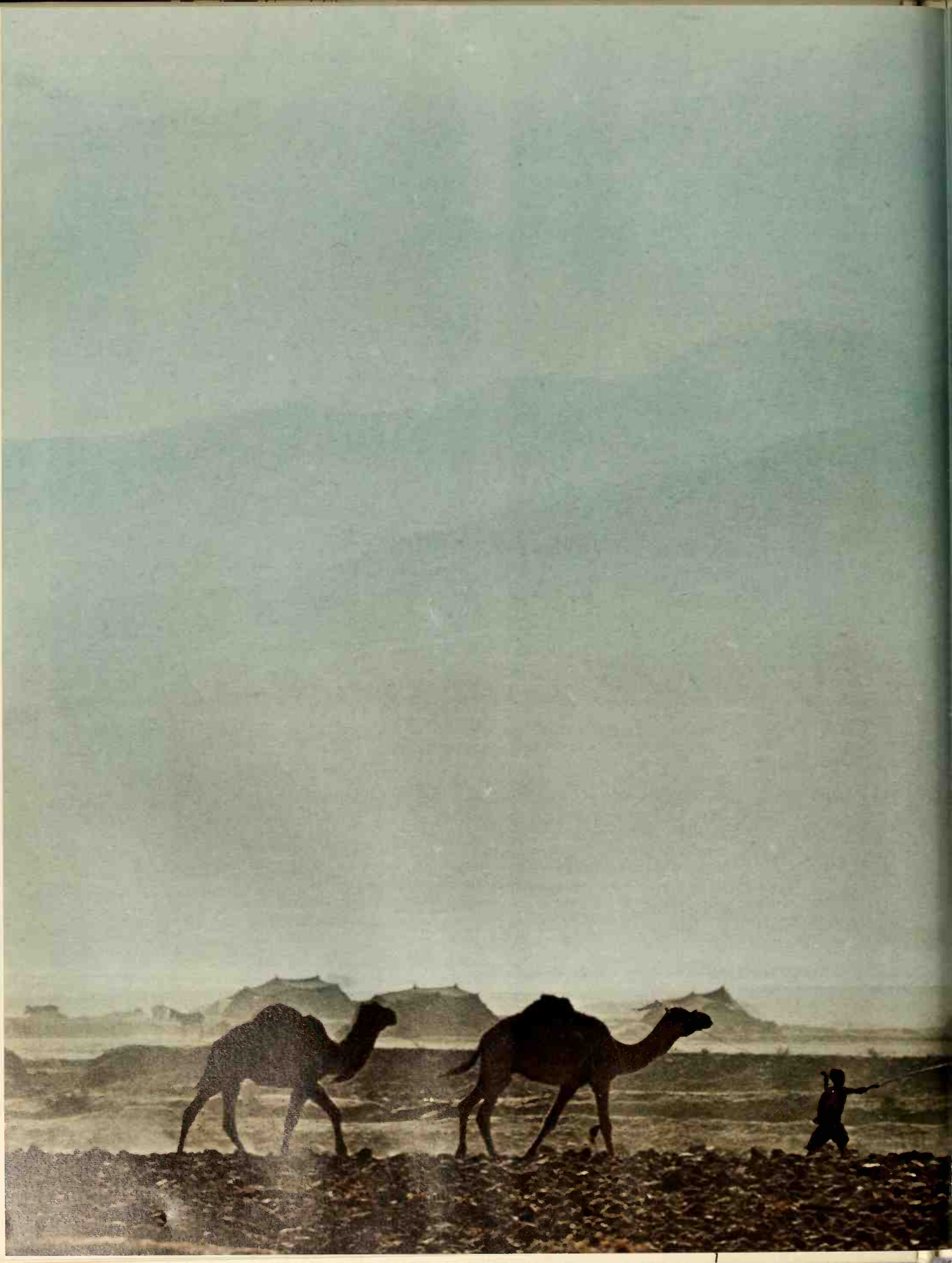
Unloaded, the camels kneel in the sun while the camp is set up, ignoring the small dusty children who romp around them.

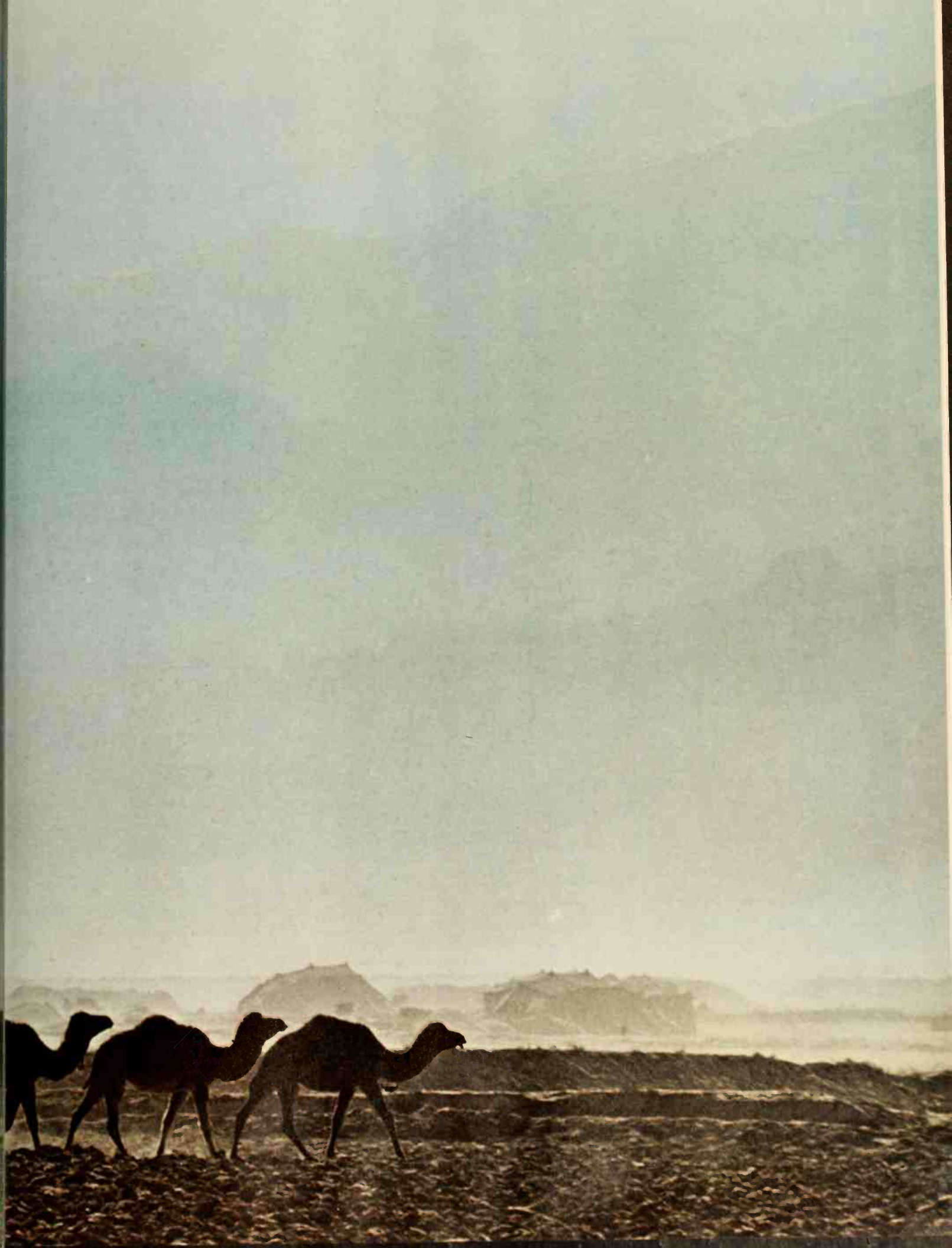
Their distinctive tents, *kizhdey*, are made of several strips of black goat-hair cloth which they sew or peg together and throw over three parallel rows of tent-poles. A transverse ridge-pole lies over the long poles of the center row and gives the tent its characteristic humped spine. The cloth is stretched over and held to the ground outside the shorter poles of the two rows. It gives only limited shelter: even when it is woven with an admixture of wool both the rays of the sun and a fine shower of rain during a storm can penetrate it. A man like a camp leader, who expects many guests, may have a separate tent to entertain them in. Today this guest tent is often a western-style canvas structure, bought from traders from Pakistan. Inside it has no hearth and is laid with carpets and cushions. Many families keep half the tent as a sleeping place for their camels. Otherwise they normally pile all the household goods – bedding, felts, storage bags – at the back and cover this wall with carpets or kelims, while in front the housewife has her hearth. Here she keeps her cooking utensils, pots and cauldrons, an iron disc griddle for baking flat bread over the fire, and a number of goat-skins in which water and food are stored.

When the time comes to move they transport their goods and supplies by camel and donkey. Any horses they keep are for riding only. Their livelihood comes from their flocks of sheep. From these they must produce enough meat, wool, skins and various forms of processed milk, not only to supply their own needs but also to sell or exchange for other goods, particularly grain, which they need but do not normally produce themselves. They depend on any profits they may make from their flocks to finance marriage payments, wedding cermonies, funerals, festivals and other incidental expenses.

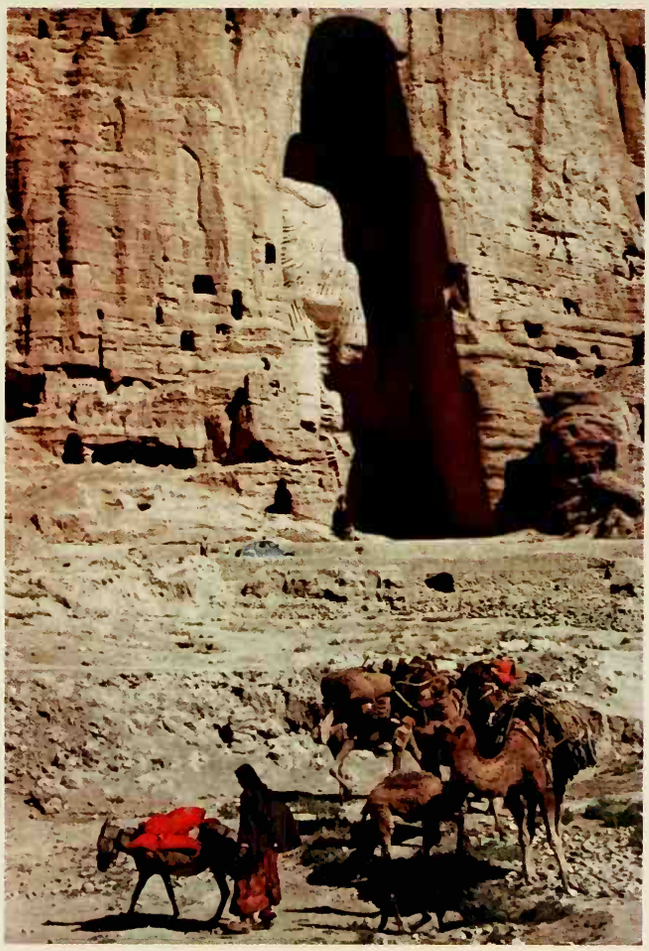
The nomad's sheep are fat-tailed sheep of several breeds of which the commonest is the Kandahari. This is well adapted to semi-desert conditions and produces reasonable wool and meat. In Turkistan the Pashtun have adopted the Arabic breed, which is well suited to conditions there and renowned for its meat, and also the Karakul breed, from which come the famous Persian lambskins. They herd the sheep in flocks of about five to six hundred head. These are the property of some five families, the 'herding unit', although some rich men may own one or more whole flocks. Each flock is in the care of two paid herdsmen, who may either be members of the herding unit or complete strangers. As the leader, the shepherd is hired on an annual contract and paid a proportion, usually ten per cent of all produce, in lambs

(Over page) From time immemorial caravans of camels bearing nomad families or trade goods have passed this way across the stony desert

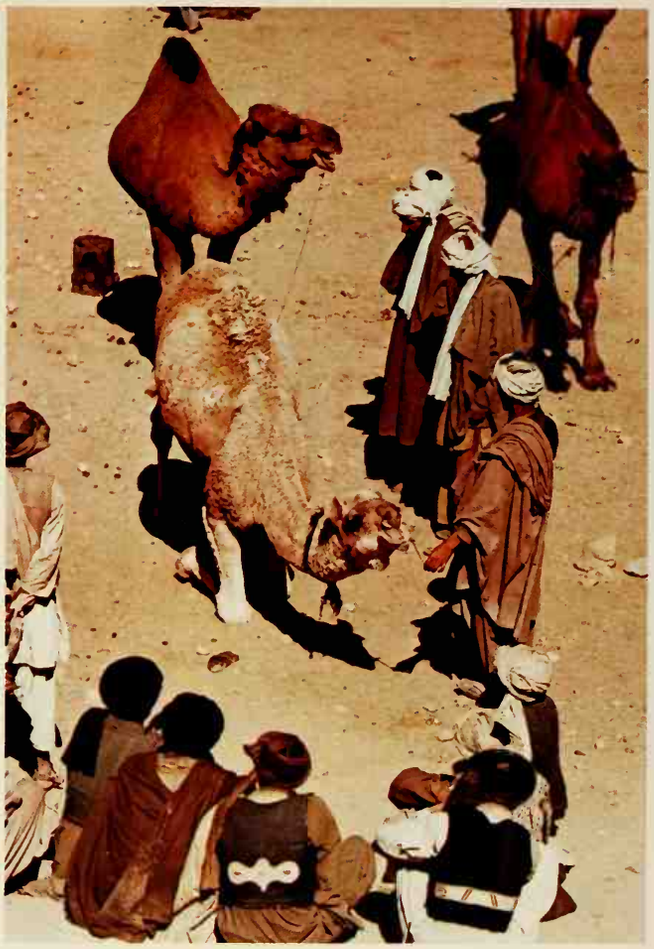




Muslim nomads pass one of the Buddhas sculpted in the 4th century from the cliff face in Bamiyan valley in the heart of the Hindu Kush.



Prospective buyers watch as a dealer puts a camel through its paces. Some nomads have trucks now, but for most camels remain as draft animals.



and wool and it is in his interest to tend the animals well. His subordinate, the drover, who follows behind the flock, is employed on a monthly basis for an agreed wage, but does not stand to gain or lose according to the condition of the flock. He is still entitled to his wages even if the whole flock is lost. The shepherds receive in addition their daily keep in food and clothing, which must be enough to protect them from all weathers as they sleep rough.

In March, with the approach of spring, the winter camps break up, and the families of each herding unit go out and camp together near their flock. Fresh, rich grass appears, the lambs are thrown, the ewes have to be milked and the milk processed, turned into yogurt and churned for butter, and the whey reduced into a hard cheese. Around New Year, 21 March, the first shearing is done. The wool from this long rough clip is mostly sold. With the end of April the spring rains cease, the heat sets in and the water supplies may fail; most important, the snow is known to be melting from the high mountain pastures, and soon the nomads begin their trek to the summer pastures.

There are some nomadic groups who build mud-brick houses in their winter quarters, making permanent villages. Many nomads often cultivate some of the land nearby for grain, or get local non-nomadic peasants to do it for them, paying them a fixed share of the crop. In many groups, particularly where the winter settlements are permanent villages with cultivated lands, a large part of the community remains behind during the summer, their brief nomadic life confined to the two months of spring when they go out with the flocks like their nomadic cousins.

The families who go on the spring trek vary from year to year. Often two brothers take it in turns to go. They sell a few lambs, lay in supplies of flour, salt and whatever else is likely to be lacking en route, lighten their baggage, reduce their tents by as much as half the size – and then one night when the moon is full they set off. Close relatives and friends say goodbye to each other for four to five months, and often many tears are shed. But in other groups, whose attachment to the land in their winter quarters is less, no-one at all is left behind during the summer.

To reach their summer quarters the western nomads, whether from Kandahar, Farah, Badghis or Turkistan, have to travel over rough country, ascending river valleys

Marching through clouds of their own dust, sheep, dogs and hired shepherds travel a few days ahead of the rest of the nomad group.

With the return to winter camp, the headman's tent is filled with a constant stream of visitors – renewing contacts, trading, catching up on news.

through deep precipitous gorges and across raging torrents, over 12,000 foot passes and the snows of mighty ranges. A few groups reach their traditional mountain pastures in less than ten days, others take a month to cover the two to three hundred miles' journey. Often, while the camel trains follow the river courses and valley bottoms, where possible the shepherds take the flocks over the shorter but colder route along the mountain crests where the grazing is easier. Sheep and their owners may not meet more than once or twice during the whole trek.

Each daily move begins before dawn and stops before the sun is very far up, for the loaded camels find the going hard under the sun, particularly at lower altitudes. At first light, or earlier if the moon is up, the camp begins to stir. Older men and small children huddle round a small fire while the women and young men busy themselves packing the baggage and loading the camels. In half an hour or so they are ready and each family ropes its five or six camels neck to tail. On the first camel, which is loaded with bedding under the best carpet or black felt and decked out in fine shell-ornamented trappings, rides the housewife with her youngest children. On the next camels ride any other girls. However when the track gets steep, uphill or downhill, the women all dismount and walk. The last camel bears the awkward load of tent poles. The men and boys walk beside the train or ride on horses or donkeys. The householder may ride ahead with other men of the camp, perhaps to stop at a wayside village where they have friends who will offer an early breakfast of tea and bread.

After about four hours on the road, when they have covered about ten miles, the nomads choose a suitable place to make camp, somewhere with grazing for the camels not too far away. They make the camels kneel, unload them and pile up the household goods into a wind-break. If the flocks are not to come into camp, the nomads take the day easy, with a snack soon after arrival and perhaps a main meal towards nightfall, after the wife has baked bread. Otherwise people sleep, sit around and talk, or entertain visitors from the nearby villages – often quite close friends or trading partners.

Throughout their summer migration the nomads trade with the villagers along the route. Village women come to the camps offering local herbs, eggs, fresh and dried fruit and, in north Afghanistan, a special dish made of noodles and yogurt, in exchange for much-needed scraps of wool. The nomad men give animals or cash advances to their friends who promise repayment next year or later, usually in grain or fodder. This credit is expensive, and

The nomad's sheep provide most of the meat for settled villagers who pay in grain or fodder to be collected later in the year.

(Bottom) Nomad camels wait in the shade in a bazaar town while their owners buy goods for the year on credit to be paid off in the spring.

with nomads from the east – though less so from the west – the villagers often get deeply into debt and have to forfeit their lands. Although the mountain villagers speak only Persian, a most important aspect of these exchanges, particularly for the normally isolated villagers, is the news, ideas and information that the nomads bring with them.

In the summer quarters sometimes several herding units camp together, though more often each unit camps separately in its own pasture. The nomads have their traditional areas, but may have to pay a due, either to their chief or to a local village landowner. Although they remain there for only about two months it is a busy time for all the family. The sheep thrive on the strong mountain grazing and continue to produce milk until July. The housewife turns the milk to yogurt almost every day. Each morning in the cool before dawn she churns the yogurt to separate the curds and whey. She reduces the whey to a hard cheese and stores the curds until the end of the milking season. Then she sets aside one night in July for making ghee.

That evening the children bring in plants, rubbish, old shoes, anything to symbolize the summer camp, and hang them up around the tent. Then after dinner all the family except the wife leave the tent and go to sleep with neighbors. The housewife remains, and in the small hours starts the slow boiling of the curds, which must not hear a human voice or they will catch fire – which is a real enough danger. By dawn the job is finished. She calls for help to pour the clarified butter from the cauldrons into the storage skins, and the neighbors come round to ask how much she has made, and to congratulate her.

Around the same time, the sheep are shorn again. Men of the camp and often neighboring camps come to help and local villagers may be employed as well. Nearly all the short summer clip of wool is then given over to the women. They tease and card it, then roll and press it into felt, a job again requiring assistance, particularly for the big black felts which form the center pieces of the daughters' trousseaux. They also make smaller gray felts to be used as blankets and rugs. Wherever the neighbors, men or women, come to help the host feeds them a meat stew for lunch.

While they are still at the summer camp the men usually visit the large nomad bazaars at Kasi or Charas. Here traders, mainly Ghiljai Pashtun from east Afghanistan, bring goods from the towns and from Pakistan by camel train and nowadays by truck. They set up white canvas tents as shops. The western nomads, and also local villagers, bring animals for sale, but come mainly to buy grain and other food supplies, cloth, second-hand American jackets and coats, guns and ammunition, dyes, and many other things. The nomads buy on credit which they will pay off the following spring.

By the end of July it is time to start for the homeland, as the winter quarters are called. The camel trains set off straight away – camels in particular should not stay much later or they are said to catch a fatal rheumatism. The flocks may well stay with the shepherds for a month longer so that they can continue benefiting from the cool mountain summer and the succession of alpine grasses. The nomad families arrive back around the end of August, at the time of the Independence Day celebrations. The harvest is in, and the fruit crops – apricots, grapes, melons – are to be enjoyed. It is a time of comparative plenty. Work, however, remains to be done. Fodder must be laid in for the winter. The farmlands must be prepared for the next sowing. In September the festivities season begins: big weddings, large gatherings, accompanied in Turkistan by Buzkashi games.

Daily social life in the camps is intense. The nomads hate to be alone and like nothing better than a heated conversation. Even where a herding unit of perhaps only two tents is camped in summer in an isolated valley or on a hilltop there will probably be a daily stream of visitors to the camp of friends, neighbors, tradesmen. Men regularly invite each other to meals, and so do women. Passing strangers are always bidden to stop for a meal or for the night, and though they may not be asked their own name or business, they are expected to communicate any other information or news they have. Whenever a

Sitting in the doorway of his tent a nomad can see far across the horizon while with the help of a friend he twists animal hairs into a rope.

wedding is held, anyone within hearing is welcome at the feast.

Each winter camp or settlement is occupied by a group of kinsmen related to each other through the male line, with a common ancestor whose name the group and probably the settlement bears. Many of the residents, however, are of other groups by origin, unrelated, or related only by marriage, to the 'core' members of the camp. These attached residents are known as neighbors, though often their status is more that of clients or even retainers. Every camp has a leader who owes his position to wealth and personality, rather than to age or simple succession from father to son. Apart from this recognized leader, who has the status of official headman responsible for dealings with government authorities, the old men of standing, the heads of the more important families, form a body of elders who are consulted for their opinions in community disputes. They may call a *jirga,* a general assembly which all adult males are eligible to attend. No leader can enforce his will and decisions are reached by persuasion and consensus.

All Pashtun have a strict code of behavior and

A tent is woven from goat hair. Perhaps it is intended for the daughter of the family – all brides must have their own new tent.

Each time the nomads make camp, and as soon as her belongings are unloaded, the housewife begins making flat bread for the evening meal.

concepts of honorable and shameful conduct. Where a woman's honor is involved, grave consequences may ensue. The penalties and scales of compensation in cases of adultery, fornication, homicide and wounding are clearly laid down, though various tribes differ in their rules. The Durrani, the royal tribe from branches of which the rulers of Afghanistan have come since the 18th century, see themselves as exclusive and superior to other groups, whether non-Durrani western Pashtun, eastern Pashtun or non-Pashtun. They observe a strict rule of descent through males only, and allow their daughters and sisters to marry only other Durrani, though they may take their wives from any other group. If, although it happens rarely, a Durrani girl should elope with a non-Durrani man there is a tremendous scandal. The girl is liable to execution by her tribesmen if caught. Where one Durrani kills another, a brief vendetta may ensue, but the affair is settled as soon as possible by the exchange of girls as brides for bereaved families.

The nomads marry their sons and daughters as soon as possible, often in their teens. But as nomad girls command a bride price of up to 100 sheep and 50,000 Afghanis ($725) in cash, and the average drover's monthly wage is only 500 Afghanis a poor man's son may not be able to marry for many years. In a marriage in which already related families are united the price may be reduced substantially. Poorer families may well arrange an exchange of girls in which no bride-price is paid either way. Otherwise in wealthier families, and particularly in the case of eldest sons, heads of families normally choose their children's spouses for them, hoping thereby to further the family interests by arranging advantageous alliances. In some cases both the boy and the girl may be allowed some freedom of choice. Much of the cash part of the payment received by the bride's father is spent on amassing her trousseau, the goods and clothes she takes to her husband which should be enough for them to set up a new household. Every married woman should have a room or tent of her own however small. Second or further wives are the privilege of the wealthy or the resort of those whose first wives have failed to bear sons.

Compared with many other nomadic societies in the Muslim world the Pashtun are devoutly religious. They try hard to observe the formal duties of Islam. Many camps have a resident mullah, one of the family who has been to study in a religious school for some years and returned with the ability to lead prayers, to contract weddings, to conduct funerals and mourning ceremonies, and to teach the nomad children not only how to pray and perform their religious duties, but also how to read and write. Many camp sites, however briefly occupied, include a small area marked off by stones, which acts as the mosque. Here the men gather for the evening prayers at least. Even women, who are not allowed in the mosques, pray quite frequently at home. At Ramazan the nomads fast strictly. At the Id which concludes the

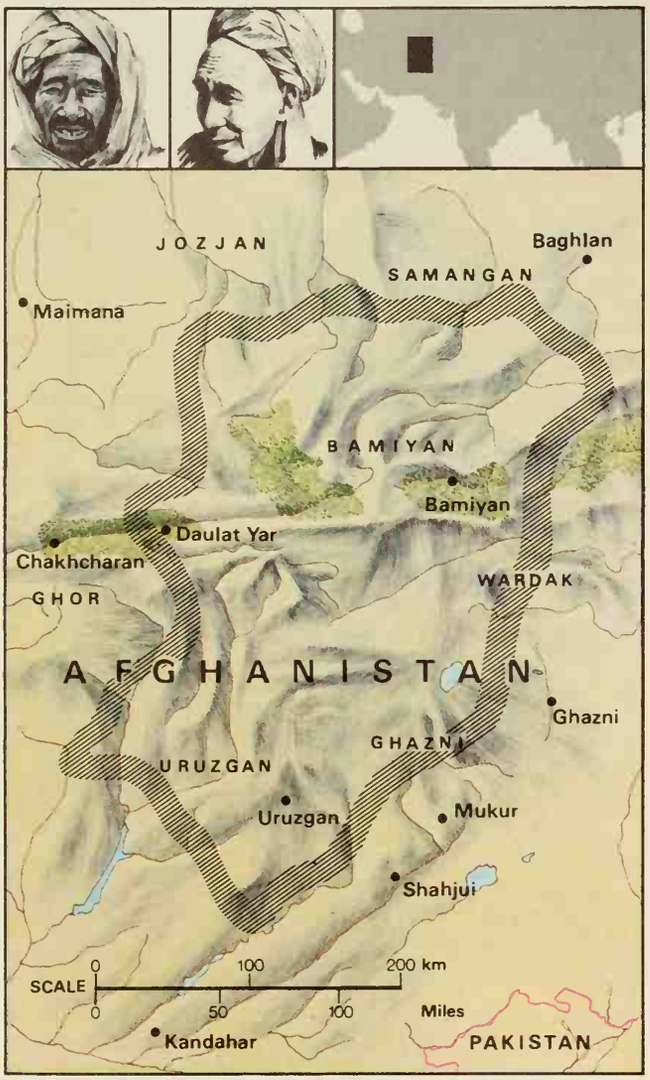
While the younger men take the camels down to water an old man has time to sit in the sun playing a two-stringed fiddle.

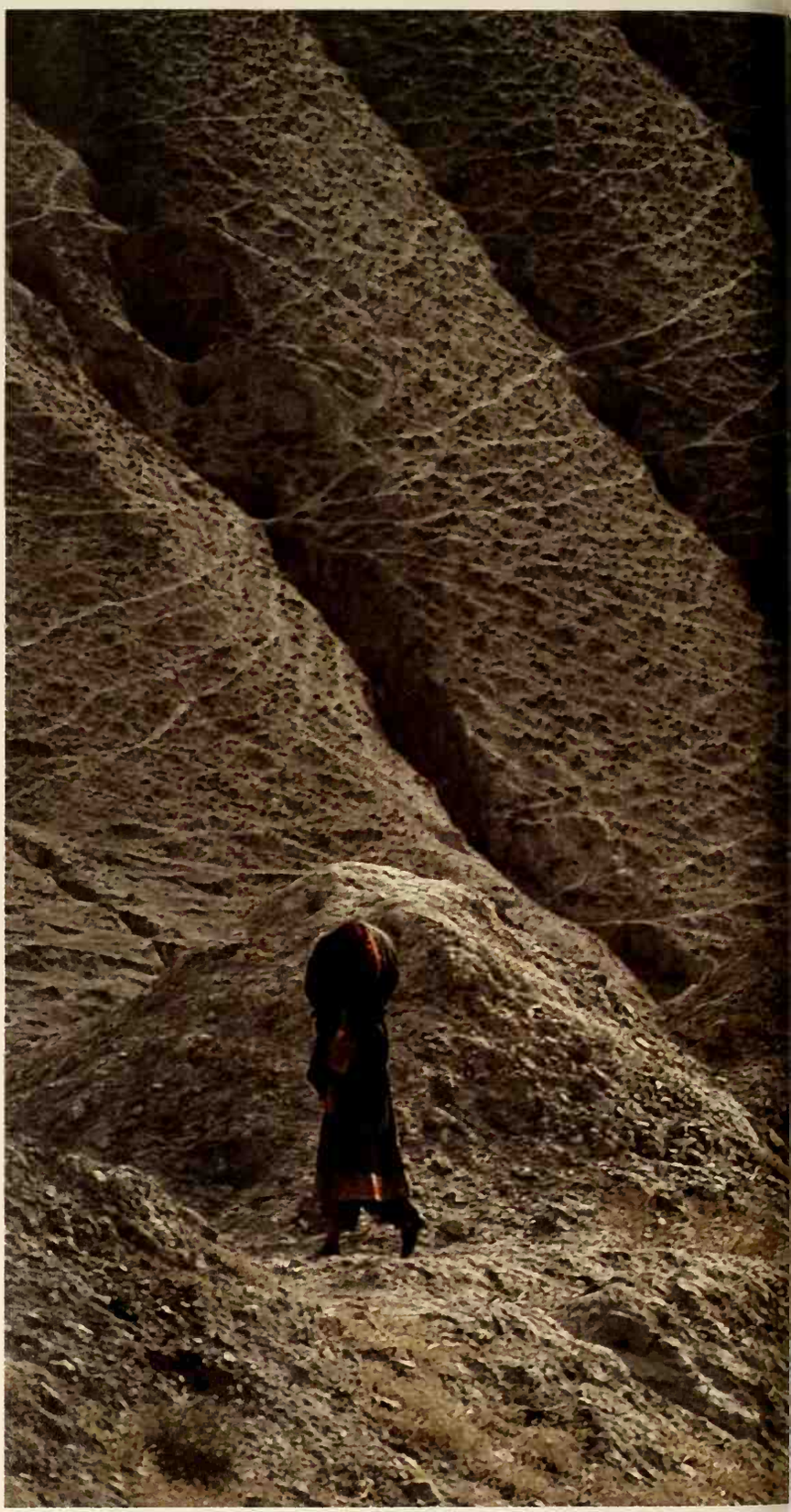
fast, and again at the Id of Sacrifice, particularly when they occur in the winter quarters, big gatherings and ceremonies are held, with massive attendance at the mosque, followed by fairs, dancing, games and competitions. But formal religious life is on the whole sober and unemotional. Many Durrani men belong, at least nominally, to one of the dervish brotherhoods. Once or twice a year their spiritual leader or *pir,* comes round to visit, to collect his tithes, and to hold Zikr ceremonies where his followers, particularly the younger men, attain trance states through controlled breathing and body movements. This ecstatic experience is held to be a proper counterpart of the formal mosque religion, and just as important.

The nomad women, who are cheerful, although their life is one long drudge are not veiled. They are hardly secluded in normal camp life, and they are outspoken in their opinions on whatever is the issue of the moment, whether a daily household budgeting detail or a major tribal scandal. But a woman may not normally attend the *jirga* assemblies, except when she has a personal cause to argue, and then the camp women's leader, a respected old woman, will argue for her. The women gather separately from the men on festive occasions. And the nomad women are not normally allowed to participate in either the mosque or the Zikr ceremonies, and are definitely deprived in matters of religious experience. Perhaps as a reflection of this, many of the nomad women, particularly those unable to bear sons, or otherwise in conflict with their husbands, are liable to fits.

The Pashtun have a romantic appeal. They are an attractive people. But the nomads' way of life is nevertheless a harsh one and highly vulnerable to climatic disasters. Moreover, their nomadism is seen by the authorities as an obstacle to attempts to bring them the benefits, such as education and health facilities which the modernizing Afghan State can offer. The nomads play an important role in the Afghan economy, however, for they exploit otherwise unused range lands and contribute pastoral produce much needed by settled society.

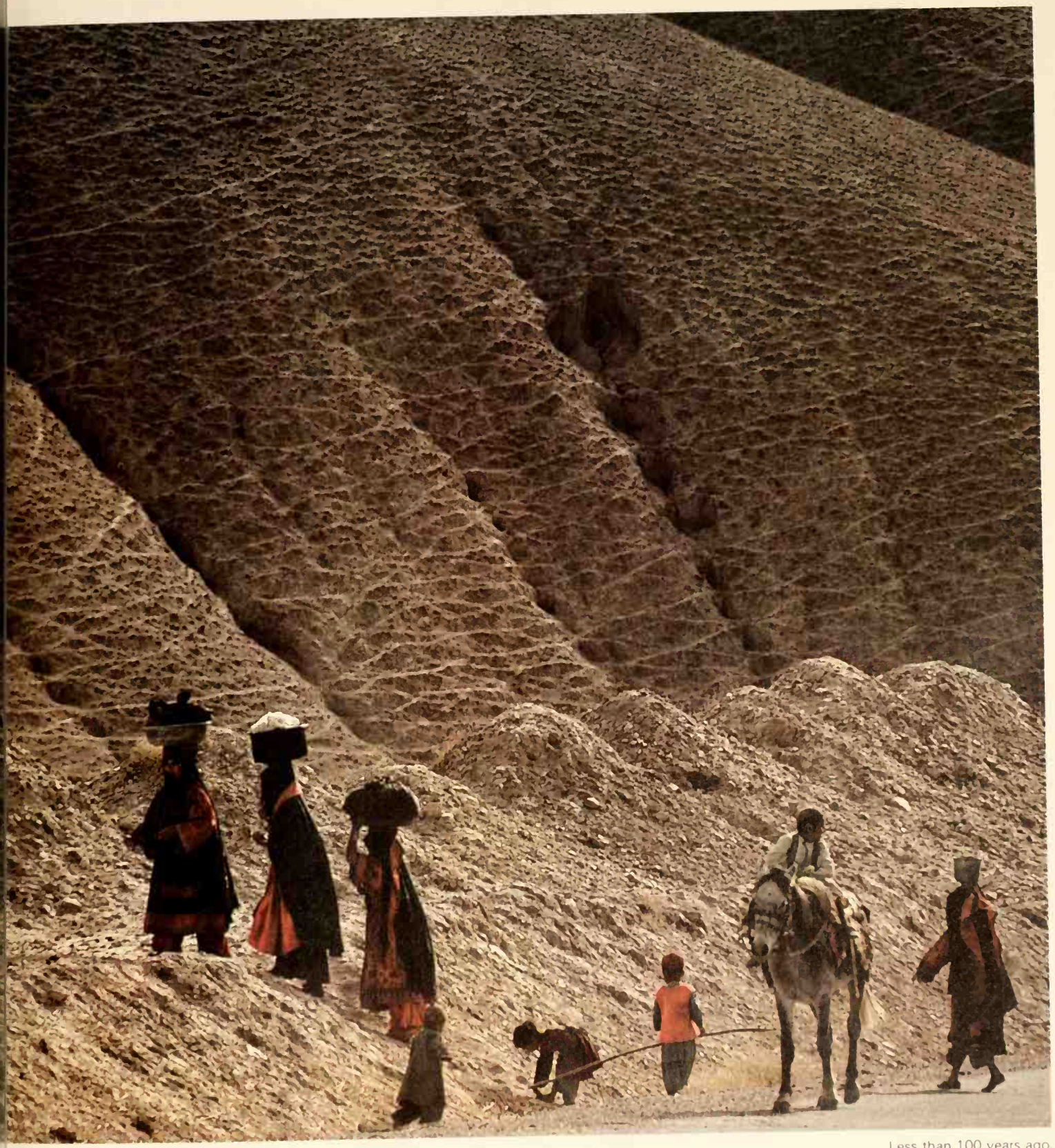
Hazara
Afghanistan





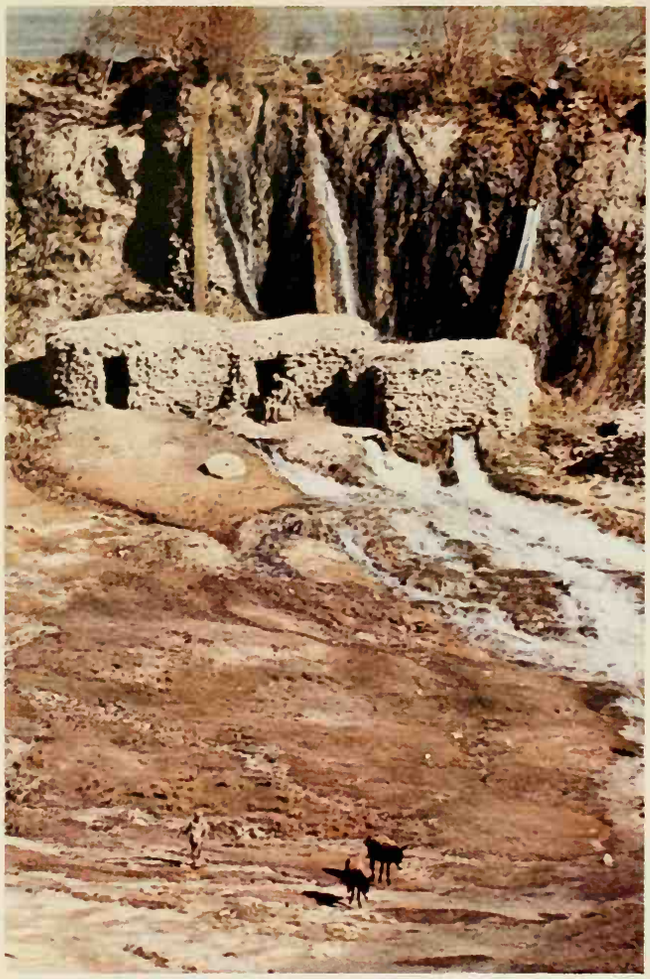
In the region of the Hazara one-roomed houses often have a mud wall, squarely adjusted around a mud dome, as though in imitation of a *yurt*, the felt tent used by central Asian nomads. Groups of these houses, held together by an encircling wall, easily conjure up the camps of Genghis Khan as they were described by 13th century missionaries and Chinese travelers: scaffoldings under domes and banners, walls of silk, wool or brocade, where the royal wives walked under headdresses so tall that they had to move into their tents backwards. The wives ruled the royal camps and sat at the Khan's side at his banquets, each wife in her appointed place. The Mongols are believed to be among the ancestors of the Hazara, but all that remains to display such a past are the tent-shaped houses and the flattish, mongoloid faces of the Hazara people.

The one million Hazara are second in size only to the Tajik, the largest Afghan Persian ethnic group in Afghanistan. They live mainly in the Hazarajat, the



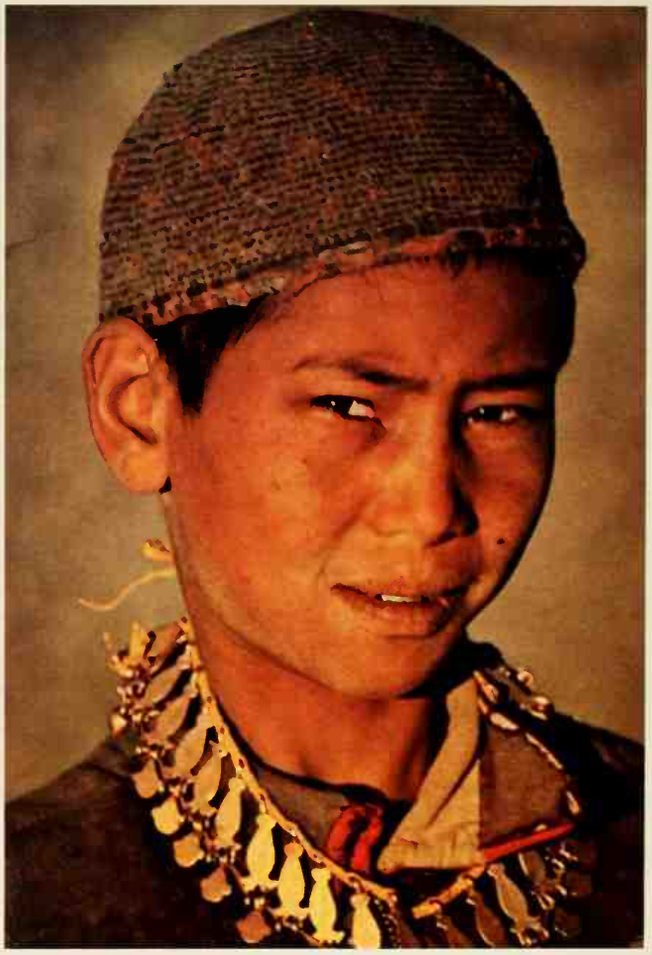
Less than 100 years ago, warring Hazara tribes made the mountains unsafe. Now, in peace, women return to their village after work.

Water trickles over the Band-i-Haibat (Dam of Awe), to be harnessed by the Hazara for the grinding wheels of their flour mills.



In winter in Hazarajat, villagers are often isolated for 6 months. In summer, however, village schools are able to open every day.

The face of a young Hazara boy reveals marked Mongoloid features – among his ancestors were troops of the armies of Genghis Khan.



mountainous eastern half of the country. Although they speak a dialect of Persian their language also has an admixture of Turkish and many pure Mongolian words and grammatical features.

The Hazara have their own tradition of their Mongolian origins. According to some written legends they were originally remnants of Genghis Khan's occupation army. Indeed the name Hazara may reflect this as it probably derives from the Persian word *hazar*, meaning one thousand, and referring to a division of the Turko-Mongol armies. But the Hazara are almost certainly of mixed origin, descended from the successive waves of Turko-Mongols who settled in Afghanistan in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, mixed with the local tribes and absorbed their culture.

By 1500 the Hazara had settled in their present, mountainous land and thanks to its inaccessibility and their own belligerence, they succeeded in maintaining the independence of their territory until 1892. In that year, Amir Abdur Rahman Khan finally defeated the Hazara, after which they came under Afghan administration. Administrative centers, roads and caravanserais

Hazara people who have left Hazarajat for towns and cities are often forced to take the heaviest work as water-carriers or porters.

were built and peace established so that caravans and travelers no longer had to by-pass Hazaraja.

In Hazarajat almost every stretch of ground which can be irrigated is cultivated, sown with wheat or barley, pulses or plants for fodder and, towards the south, with maize. Cows, sheep and goats are kept around the villages for their meat and milk; oxen are kept to pull the plows, and, with asses and horses, are used as pack animals. They keep as many animals in fact as they have winter fodder to feed. They are a self-sufficient people who produce all they need apart from luxuries like tea and sugar. They barter their surplus wheat and clarified butter with the Pakhtun (Pashtun – see page 100) nomads; they sell woven materials and felt mats. In return the Pakhtun nomads give them cheap cotton cloth, sugar and tea. The Pakhtun have often allowed them credit, with the result that the Hazara frequently fell into debt and the nomads increasingly took over their lands and became absentee landlords. To avoid hardship many Hazara then moved to the Afghan towns where they took work as porters, water carriers and refuse collectors.

Nevertheless Hazarajat, despite its sparse natural resources, seems a densely populated country. The compact villages ring the irrigated zones. The houses, made mainly of mud and stone, are well adapted to the climate. In the coldest regions a house consists of one windowless room with a porch. The only light is from a smoke-hole in the roof, and even that can be closed. Elsewhere there are two- or three-roomed houses; but there is always a fireplace in the stable, so that, as in the one-roomed houses, the animals are cared for in a severe winter.

In the house of a Hazara family there is only simple furniture. In a corner an open fire-place or a baking oven is built into the floor. There are small recesses in the clay walls where oil lamps and other possessions are kept. One contains the family's wooden chest of clothes and treasures. In others stand woven bags and skin sacks. There are earthenware pots, imported copperware, wooden bowls and other utensils. At night the family sleeps under quilted cotton blankets on home-made felt mats spread on the floor.

Although in the highest regions of the mountains the Hazara stay in their villages all the year round, in the warmer regions they generally move for three summer months to small mud huts in the fallow fields for their winter houses become unbearably infested with insects.

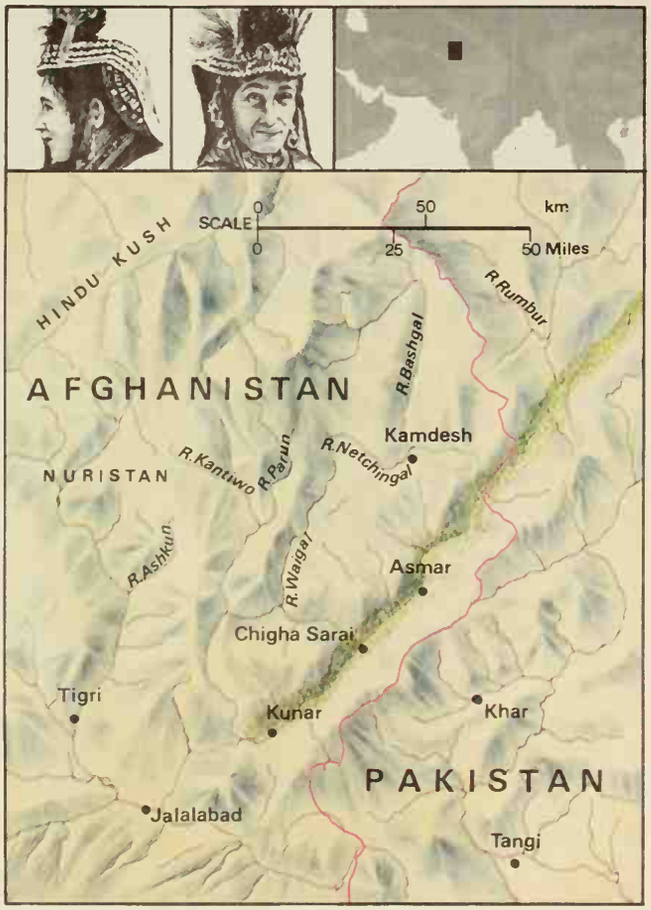
In regions towards the north they trek up into the mountains to the high pastures for the summer. Here they live in felt-covered round tents (*chapari*), of a kind also dwelt in by the Uzbek. Summer and autumn are the active seasons for the Hazara. In winter, the Hazara explain, they do nothing but eat and sleep, for often they are cut off from the outside world for up to six months. It is therefore essential that in the summer they busy themselves gathering and storing fuel and fodder for the isolated winter months. Throughout Hazarajat, these necessities are stored in stacks.

Hazara women weave, make pottery and felt, and process the dairy foods which are kept for the winter. They employ simple horizontal ground looms for weaving the heavy *barak* cloth which is used in men's clothes and rugs, blankets and the sacks which are slung across the pack animals. The women make felt by spreading the loose carded wool on an old felt mat, sprinkling it with water, rolling it up and tying it together and finally rolling it hundreds of times over the ground.

In the morning the women bring the milk taken from the cows to the boil – the first stage in milk preparation. They then make butter from the soured milk of the day before, churning it in goatskins hung beneath a tripod, finally turning it into ghee, or clarified butter, by boiling it so that the water content is reduced to a minimum. This ghee will keep for anything up to eight months. But the Hazara have many other ways of using the milk. Buttermilk from the churn can be boiled, hung up in a cloth to drain the whey so that the remaining solids can be pressed into round lumps and dried in the sun. The result is *grut*, a favorite winter food, which keeps for years.

Traditionally the Hazara have never been a politically united people. Instead they have always been split into a number of tribal and regional divisions with hereditary, almost feudal, leaders called *khans* or *mirs*. Many of the Hazara people have names with the prefix *day* (Day-Zangi, Day-Hundi for example) the meaning of which is unknown. But an Afghan proverb says that a Hazara without a *day* is like an Afghan without a *-zai*, a word which means son of. This all reflects the importance of tribal affiliations, even in these times since the tribal leaders, or *khans*, have been stripped of their feudal powers. Today, although the *khan* families are still influential, the people of Hazarajat belong to seven different, multi-ethnic provinces. It seems that while tribal identities within the society of the Hazara are crumbling, their common identity in relation to outsiders has become more marked.

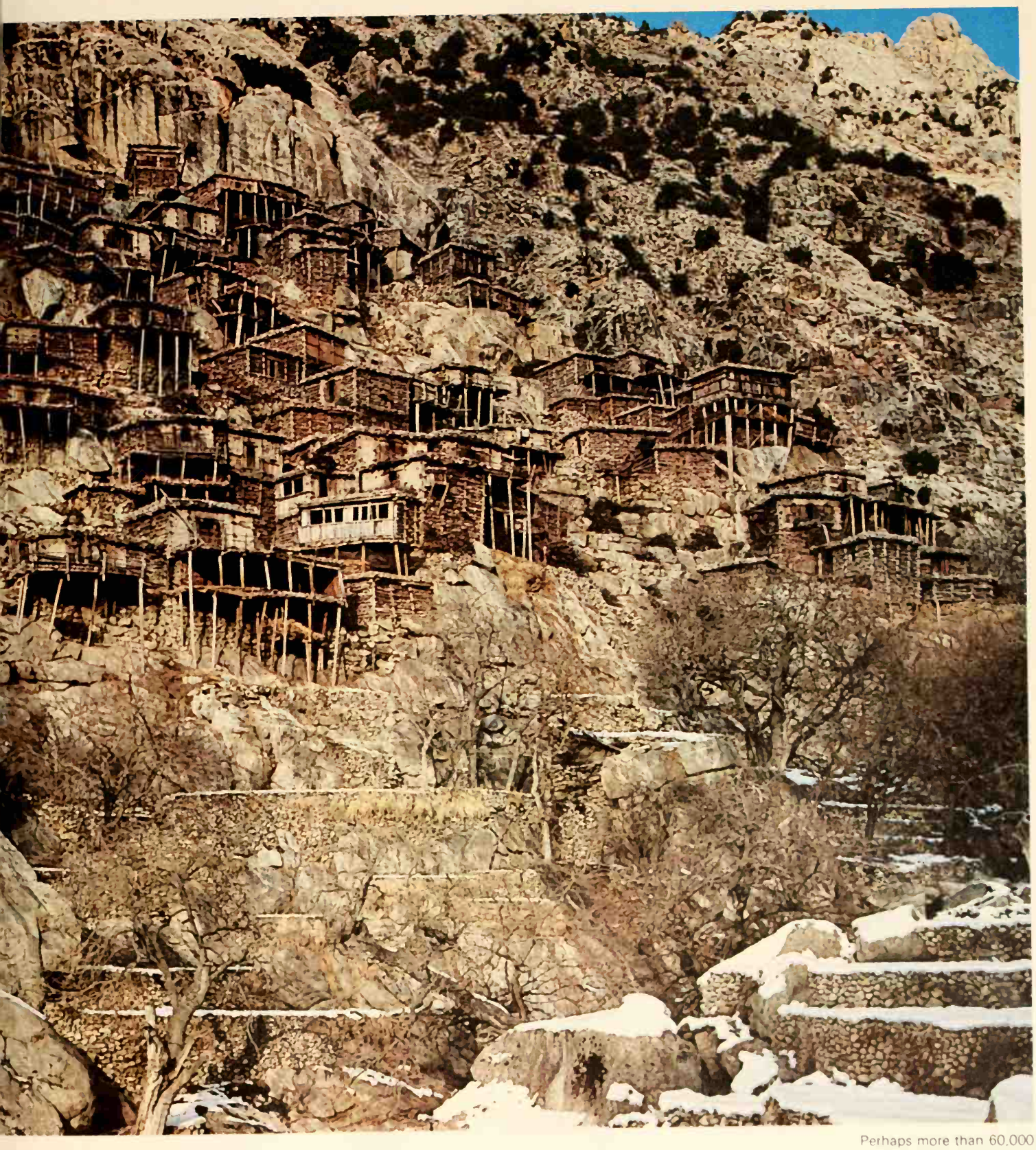
Nuristani Afghanistan



Nuristan, a mountainous region some 5,000 square miles in extent, lies on the southern slopes of the Hindu Kush Range in north-eastern Afghanistan. It is a land of forests with deep ravines separated by high mountains. Perhaps sixty to eighty thousand people live in these isolated valleys. In the lower part of one valley – the Bashgul – there is now a motorable road, but in the rest of Nuristan there are not only no roads, the mountain trails are not even suitable for horses, mules, or donkeys. One must walk. In winter deep snow may isolate one village from another for weeks at a time and the high mountain passes which connect one valley with another are often closed from December to April.

There are four main valley systems in Nuristan; there are also numerous tributary valleys which contain important settlements. In each of the main drainage areas the inhabitants speak a different language. These are Kati, Waigali, Ashkuni and Paruni; they have been classified as Dardic languages and belong to the Indo-Iranian family.

The earliest known European penetration of this 'Kafiristan' (land of infidels) occurred in 1885 with the Lockhart expedition, but it was a medical doctor from the Orkneys – George Scott Robertson – who was the



Perhaps more than 60,000 people live in Nuristan in villages — clusters of timber houses clinging to almost inaccessible mountain slopes

first to explore and map the country. He spent a year among the Kafirs (1889-90) and published a book called the *Kafirs of the Hindu Kush* which is still the standard work on the area. In 1896-98 the Amir of Afghanistan made war on these independent peoples and forced them to accept Islam. The name of the country was then changed to Nuristan – 'land of light'.

The people of Nuristan are proud, and though they are hospitable and friendly, they are also aggressive and quick to avenge any injury. They enjoyed centuries of independence and raised their sons to be warriors, training them to be skilled hunters with spear and bow, and later with matchlocks and flintlocks. Today a man's most prized possession may be a British army Enfield rifle.

For eight or nine centuries they held out against the tide of Islam which had spread eastward across Asia from Arabia. They raided Muslim settlements and passing caravans in the Kunar valley, the Alingar valley, and the Kabul valley. These raids against the encroaching Muslim population became institutionalized, that is, a successful warrior was rewarded according to the number of men he had killed. He could achieve rank in this way and so improve his status at home.

Another way in which a man could become important in this society was to give a series of public feasts over a period of years, inviting everyone in his village to attend – perhaps 1,000 to 2,000 people at a time. Later, as he aspired to achieve still higher rank, he would invite other villages as well. In order to understand how such large scale feasting was possible, let us look at the economics of village life in Nuristan.

The people live in permanent villages located on steep mountain slopes at about 2,000 meters above sea level. These villages may vary in size from two dozen households to more than 300. Each village has round it the terraced fields, irrigation channels, mountain streams and pastures which provide the basis for the kind of 'alpine' economy that is characteristic of Nuristan.

The basic division of labor in the society coincides with a division in the economic system: a combination of arable agriculture and transhumant (semi-nomadic) herding. The women are responsible for the raising of grain on irrigated terraces. In spring they clean and repair the irrigation channels, dig the small terraces with spades, plant the grain (barley, millet, maize and wheat), weed and water the crops and, at the end of August or early September, harvest the grain. Most fields in Nuristan are too small to make plowing practical; though plows are used in parts of the Bashgul and Parun valleys.

The men, meanwhile, have been herding livestock on distant pastures. The transhumant movement of herdsmen and livestock from permanent villages to seasonal pastures begins in spring, when all livestock are taken from the winter stables on a certain day and moved out to the early pastures. These herds consist of goats, cattle, and sheep, in that order. In Waigal valley they say a rich

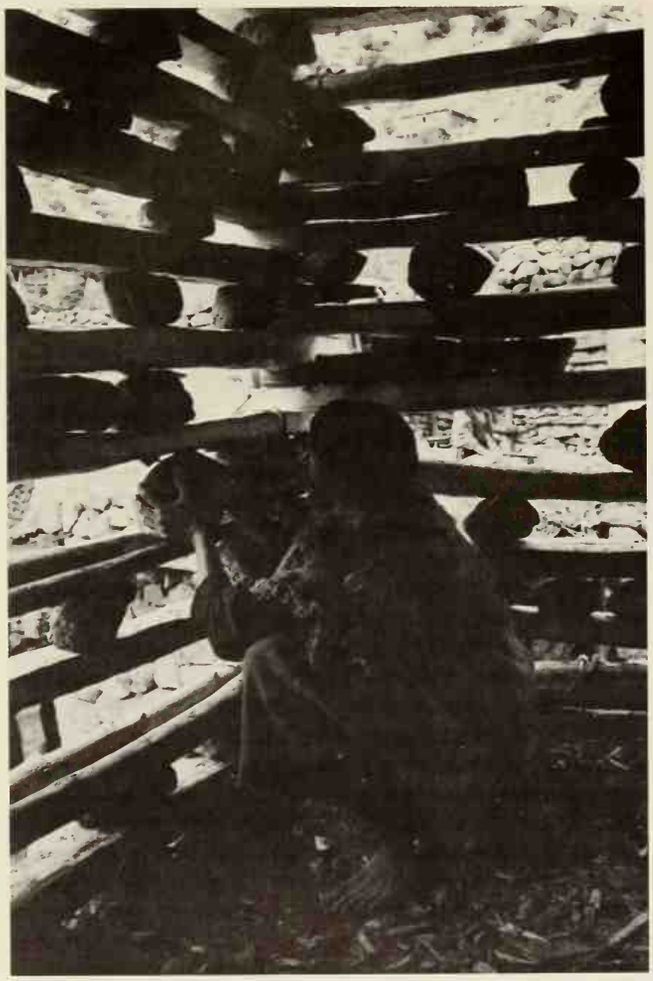
Severe conditions force the Kalash to do all traveling on foot. In winter they are often totally isolated by snow-blocked passes.

The Kalash take great care to stock up with meat, cheeses and liquid butter, for winter feasts. Here they skin a beast before salting and storing it.

(Center) Nuristani 'People of Light' call the Kalash *kafir*. Unlike the Nuristani the *kafir* are infidels, unconverted to Islam.

Kalash love an excuse to sing and dance – as at the great outdoor spring and autumn festivals for Jestak, goddess of home and family.

Nuristani men build houses by jamming stones between a timber framework and then plastering the walls. A house may cost 10 cows or 60 goats.



The isolation of Nuristani hilltop villages like Malil and the shortage of pasture makes inhabitants wary of people from other villages.

man has at least 500 head of livestock. Of these, approximately 450 will be goats, twenty or thirty cattle, and the rest sheep. In other areas, according to altitude, relief and the accessibility of pastures, the proportion of cattle may be higher.

When the first pastures have been thoroughly grazed and as the snow line retreats with the onset of warmer weather, the herds move up to the next set of pastures together. These herd movements are carefully controlled by a special group of villagers who are elected for this purpose each spring. They have the authority to levy fines on those who fail to move their animals out of the winter stables on the appointed day. They can also fine a herdsman who allows his livestock to stray onto the wrong pastures or into cultivated fields. These men are also responsible for seeing that the terraced fields are watered in strict rotation according to village rules; anyone who takes water from the channels out of turn is liable to be fined. In the autumn they must see that no one picks grapes or walnuts before the harvest for these fruits has been announced. Fines may vary from one big cheese to a goat, or even a cow. The fines that have been collected belong to those elected members who have been charged with these supervisory responsibilities. Usually they meet in autumn at the end of their tour of duty and, using the fines they have collected, give themselves a feast. This is the only 'pay' they receive.

Meanwhile, the herdsmen have moved from one set of pastures to another, changing every 15 or 20 days, until by midsummer they have reached the highest pastures at 3,000-3,500 meters above sea level. Here they milk the animals and make butter and cheese. The cheeses, weighing 5 to 8 kilograms, will keep for a long time if properly salted. These foods are carried down to the village and stored away for the autumn feasts and long winter months ahead.

As midsummer passes, the herds move on to other pastures, gradually descending to lower altitudes so that by first frost they are back in the neighborhood of the winter stables. By this time the women will have harvested the grain, gathered hay on the mountainsides, and collected a good supply of firewood.

When the harvest is in and the herdsmen are back from the mountains there is a festive air in the village. It is at this season that most marriages take place, as the supplies needed for wedding feasts are at hand. This is also the time of the year when feasts of merit are most likely to be given by men who wish to achieve rank and improve their social and political standing in the community.

In Nuristan the important economic group is the extended family – that is, a family consisting of an old patriarch, his married sons and their wives and children. In agricultural affairs, and on certain occasions in political matters, these extended families compete with each other. The shepherds, for example, compete among themselves to see who can get the most milk, who can make the most clarified butter, who can produce the greatest number of cheeses. Back in the village, the women compete to see who can harvest the greatest number of baskets of grain. No one in Nuristan is really satisfied to produce just enough to supply his family with food: everyone strives to achieve a surplus. They work hard, not just to achieve a subsistence minimum, but to produce far more than they can actually consume.

From this we might conclude that they intend to market their surplus foods, or to exchange them for other goods. But this is not the case. The sole purpose for amassing surplus foodstuffs in this society is so that they may be given away. In short, they are used to achieve social goals, rather than economic goals.

On the 20th July, 1970 I attended such a feast in the village of Nisheigrom in Waigal valley. The feast was held out of doors on the rooftops and the entire village was present. My informants estimated that the feast required at least 5 cows, 35 big goats, 565 kilograms of wheat, 565 kilograms of millet, 160 liters of clarified butter, and 160 kilograms of cheese. The host, a man named Kuvera, offered this feast to the village to celebrate the raising of the roof beams on the new village mosque. By doing so his status in the community was greatly enhanced.

Before the Afghan invasions of 1895, when Nuristan (or Kafiristan, as it was then called) was completely independent, there were these two ways for a man to become important in his community. He could embark upon a career as a warrior and achieve rank according to the number of enemies (ie Muslims) he killed, or he could stay at home and give feasts of merit. The most important men usually did both, though an influential position in Nuristani society required, and still requires, more than mere rank.

A man of influence is above all else a good public speaker with a reputation for persuasive argument and a clear grasp of the problems relating to a given issue. This brings us to consider what form of 'government' exists in traditional Nuristani society, for there are no chiefs or princes, no judges or jury, no written laws, no police or army. And yet social order is maintained and those who break village laws are punished. How then does the system work?

Everyone in Nuristan is a member of a named descent group by virtue of birth. Descent is traced through the male line; the larger groups which are formed according to this principle are usually termed lineages and clans by anthropologists. Members of a lineage co-operate with one another. If a man needs assistance it is to his kinsmen that he looks for help. If a man is involved in a dispute, the members of his lineage rally round to give support. Both plaintiff and defendant can normally expect such support; indeed, they have a right to it. Membership in a lineage carries with it certain rights, duties, and obligations, and because of this, the 'lineage system' is an

One of the jobs of the village wood-carver is to make grave statues. Though socially inferior, he is vital to the Kalash culture.

organizing principle in social, economic, religious and political affairs.

Disputes are settled by mediators. Having said this, we must qualify it, for it gives the impression that they hear a case and then announce a verdict. In fact, they cannot do this. They are mediators, not judges. Having heard one side of the story they go to the home of the other party involved in the dispute and listen to his version of what happened. They may do this several times, as they hear evidence and question witnesses. Then, in the end, they try to propose a workable solution. When both sides agree and the fines are paid, the case is over.

Today in Nuristan the important man is not necessarily a famous warrior, or outstanding giver of feasts, though these virtues are still much admired, he is rather the man who has repeatedly demonstrated his skill as a mediator. As his reputation grows he will be invited to settle 'big' disputes in neighboring villages and his fame will spread throughout the valley. He has become a man of influence and is respected by all members of the society. In Nuristan one cannot go higher than this.

Striking features of Nuristani culture are building techniques and architectural styles. Cantilever bridges span the rivers; large timber houses perch on steep rocky slopes; complex irrigation systems run for miles along the mountains. The houses are often covered with finely chiseled geometric designs cut into the wood; household utensils such as bowls and tables are carved in detail with elaborate designs. Such patterns are not just decoration: they represent the rank of the owner. The iron and silver work provides evidence of a long tradition that has developed many special features. Potters, weavers, leather-workers, and basket makers also contribute to the material culture of Nuristan.

All these things are produced by a small hereditary group of craftsmen who form a separate class in Nuristani society. In nearly every village there are a few families of these craftsmen who practise and pass on traditional skills. Socially, they occupy a low position in the society. In the hands of these few people – not more than 10 per cent of the population at most – rest all the skills capable of producing and perpetuating the material culture of Nuristan.

Although many features of Kalash culture are similar to those of Nuristan, they are in some respects a rather different people as their language – Kalasha – is an Indian language. Certainly they pursue the same modes of livelihood as the Nuristani and share many other cultural characteristics with them.

In 1895 when the 'Durand Line' was demarcated to separate Afghanistan from India, the Kalash Kafir Valleys of Rumbur, Bomboret and Berir were left on the Chitral side (now part of West Pakistan). This apparently minor detail in the work of the Boundary Commission had profound implications for the Kalash. Had they been

Detailed geometric carvings on houses and possessions denote the status of the Kalash inhabitant, reached through wisdom and generous feasts.

included within the confines of Afghanistan they would have been converted to Islam in the Afghan invasions of 1895-98. As it is, they have been left in these isolated valleys to continue their traditional way of life and their ancient religious observances.

The Kalash Kafir population is small: not more than 3,000 or 4,000 altogether, and as they are slowly accepting Islam it may be that there are now no more than 1,500 who actually practise the old religion.

Many Kalash villages have temples to Jestak – a goddess protecting the family, children and the home. Numerous ceremonies concerning family life are performed there during the year. At the great spring and autumn festivals which are held out of doors by the Jestak temple, the villagers assemble to dance and sing. Several Kalash villages also have open air shrines to the god Mahandeo. These usually have a stone base and a large carved wooden box on top, from which project carved wooden heads of horses. Opposite there are wooden benches with carved vertical planks commemorating great sacrifices of the past.

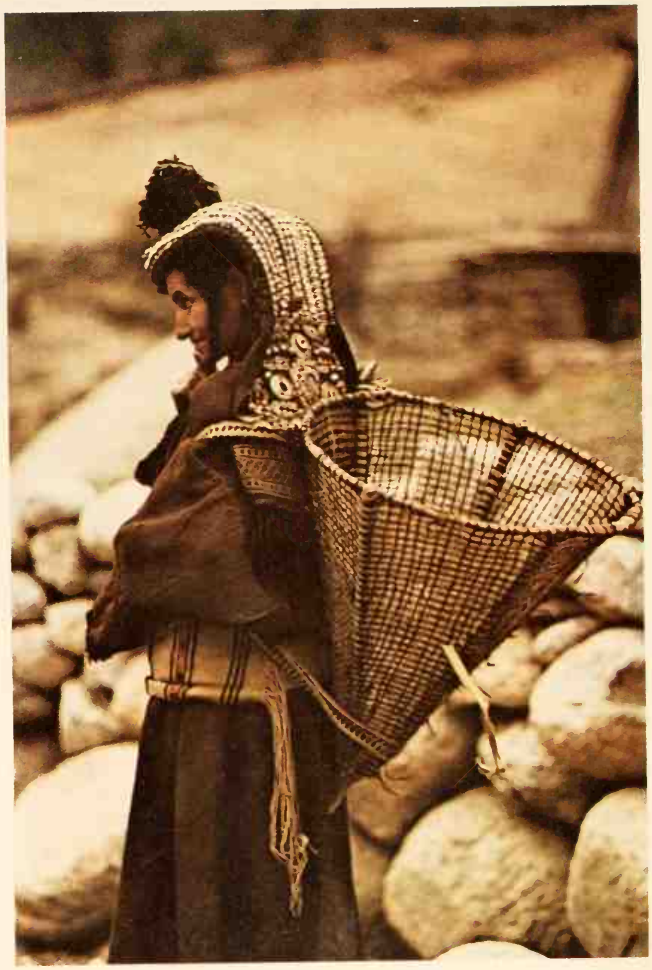
The shrine of Sajigor in Rumbur Valley is a holy place of major importance. On August 27th 1967 I was present when 40 or 50 shepherds came down from the mountain pastures carrying baskets of cheese. On top of each basket were juniper branches for the sacred fire. The shrine is only a few yards from the river and is set in a grove of trees. From the branches of these trees hang the horns of goats sacrificed at the shrine. The shrine itself is a stone platform some ten feet square and about four feet high which is said to contain the body of a sacrificed goat with an ancient knife obtained in battle against the Bashgul Valley Kafirs. The carved wooden heads of horses project from the structure.

As their baskets were unloaded and the large round cheeses set out round the edge of a cloth that had been spread on the ground, the juniper branches were piled in a heap beside the shrine. By this time nearly a hundred men and youths had gathered in the sacred grove (women are not allowed to enter the area); others were coming up from villages down the valley carrying goat-skin sacks full of round flat cakes of bread.

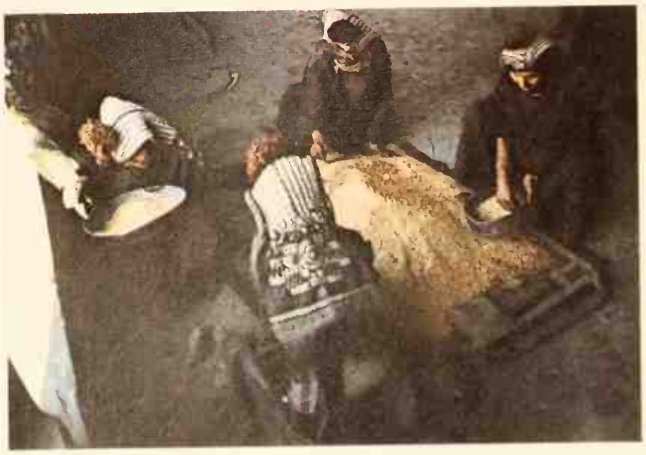
A fire was made in front of the shrine and when it was burning well, fresh green juniper branches were piled on; at once thick clouds of white smoke rose in the air. A goat was led forward and a virgin boy milked it so that a few drops fell on a cake of bread. The bread was then broken and the pieces thrown through the smoke onto the shrine.

The priest stepped forward, raised his arms and began to chant; a cry that was taken up and repeated by the assembled crowd until the grove echoed with sound. Then the cheeses were cut into thick wedges and everyone present – even Muslim visitors – received one of these on a piece of bread. In a few moments the solemn religious atmosphere of the grove had changed to take on the air of an afternoon picnic.

Although Kalash women do not wear veils and are more independent than Afghan women, they are kept separate during ceremonies and feasts.



(Bottom) Kalash women work very hard, growing rice and maize and collecting wood. The men herd livestock on distant pastures, or sit at home.



Hunza
Pakistan

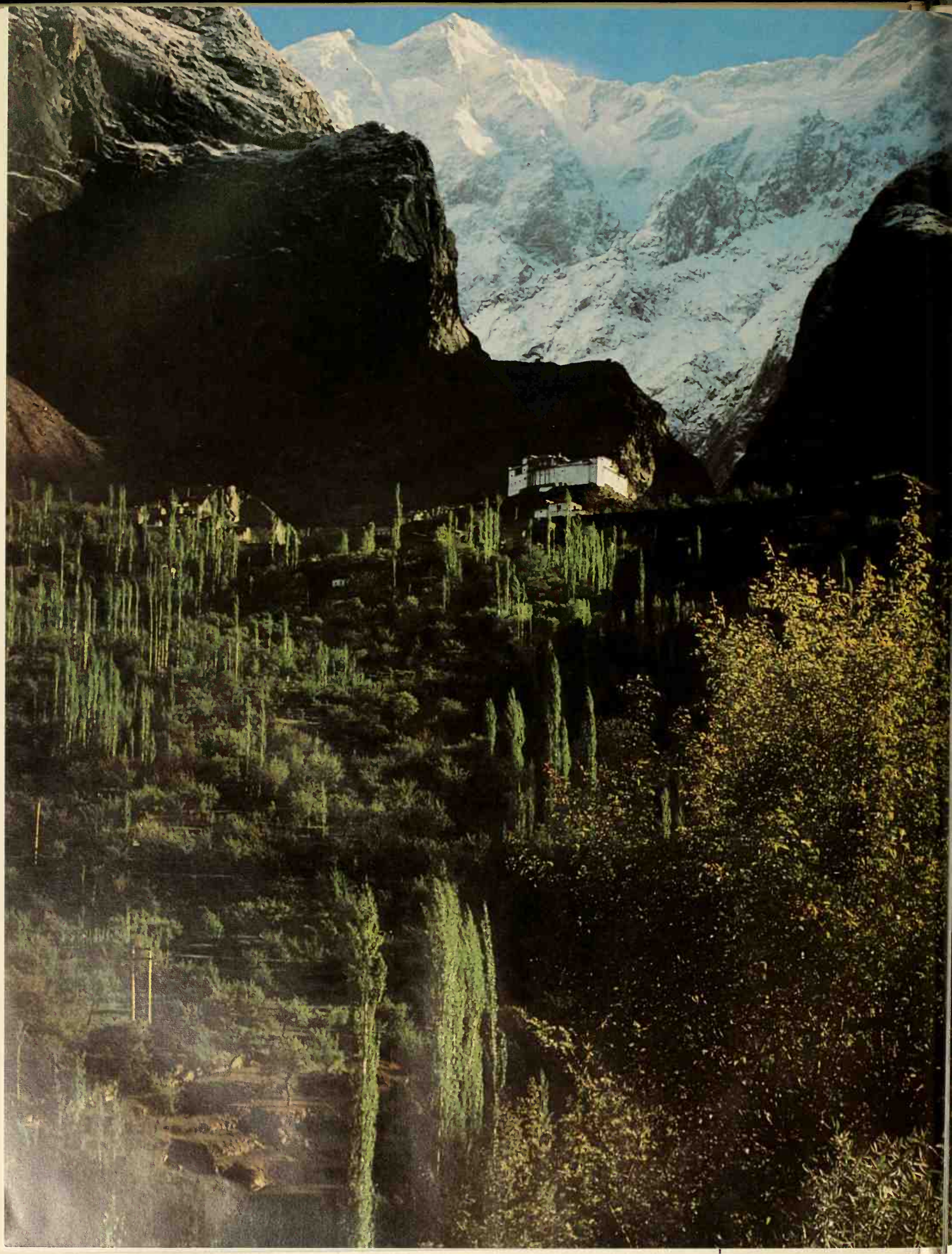
Legend and romance weave a dream around this valley which some call Shangri-La, peopled by the descendants of Alexander the Great's soldiers.

When a Burusho man from Hunza gives directions he will not talk about the cardinal points of the compass. He will speak of going up or down river, or up or down hill. He locates houses by the channel they draw water from. In Hunza land and water dominate life.

The state of Hunza is locked in at the extreme north-west of the Himalayas where the Karakoram mountains join the Hindu Kush and Pamir ranges. They form a nexus which the people of Hunza aptly call the 'Roof of the World', a place where Pakistan meets China, Afghanistan and Russia.

The rugged land is cut by high and narrow rock-strewn valleys ending in white glaciers. There are jagged crags above barren black walls of rock with an occasional background of giant white peaks sharp against the deep blue of the sky. Much of the Hunza is uninhabitable, for it is only where there is a lucky coincidence of soil and water that men can settle.

There are two geographically and culturally distinct peoples living on the strips of land along the mud-cliffed Hunza river gorge – the Wakhi and the Burusho. The Wakhi were nomads in Russian Turkistan and Afghani-



stan, some of whom settled with their flocks alongside the Chapursan river and the Hunza river north of its westward loop. Rising above 9,000 feet, their land is too high to grow wheat or really good fruit; only their pastures are better than those of the Burusho further down the river gorge. The Burusho live, at 7,800 feet, in an eight-mile-valley on the right river bank of the Hunza gorge and form the majority of the population. Their language, Burushaski, is unique. Some claim that the Burusho are descended from men of Alexander the Great's army; others say they originally came from the north or lived in Baltistan, in the east.

In late spring the Hunza valley becomes a mass of bush-green terraces, fields studded with leafy willows and poplars, orchards of apples, peaches and pears, mulberries and swelling red apricot buds. These spring colors fall against a crimson-brown background of rocks rising to snow-laced crags, with the giant white pyramid of Rakaposhi standing opposite. Approaching Hunza after three dusty days on foot along the bleak, tortuous path from Gilgit you can understand why travelers should have called it a Shangri-La.

A myth of Hunza has grown up presenting an image of the Hunzakut as a wise old people who know neither strife nor illness but live on peacefully into ripe old age, undisturbed in a perfect society and a land of plenty. The myth is not without some truth. Almost all who have visited the Hunza have commented on their cheerfulness, courtesy and tolerance, and above all their spirit of co-operation; but this spirit existed in a struggle against both the harsh land and other peoples, in a society that has been radically changing over the last century.

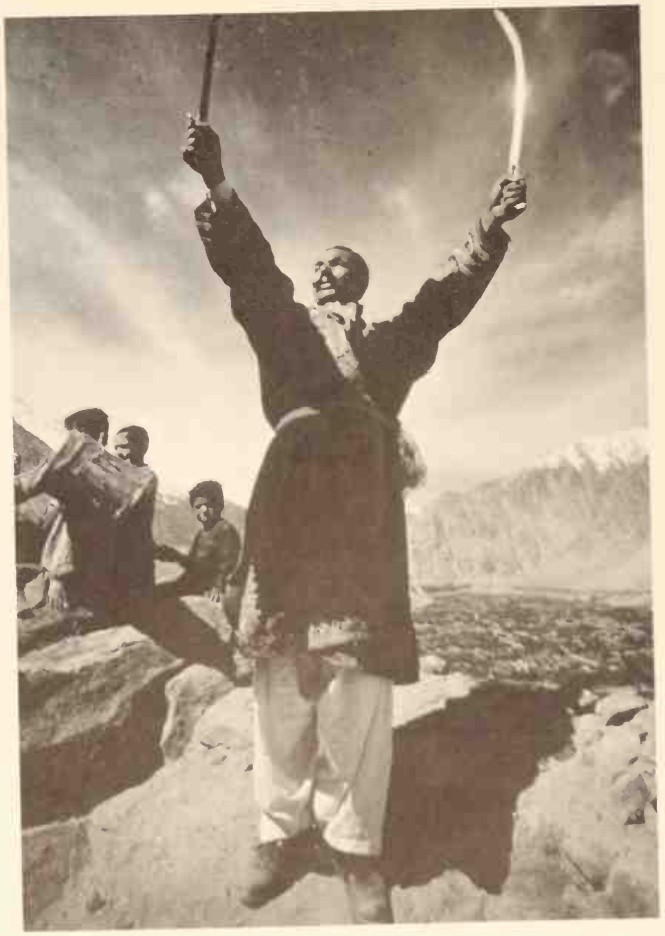
The oral traditions of Hunza tell of the common origin of the royal families of Hunza and its twin state of Nagar across the river gorge. They also mentioned an exchange of princesses between these families. In the eastern Asian kingdoms these exchanges were signs of alliance, and the first mention of Hunza in Chinese annals records such an exchange between Hunza and Tibet in the 7th century AD. The castles of the early settlement in the Hunza valley were built by craftsmen from Baltistan who accompanied a princess on another exchange as part of her dowry. And yet despite these alliances, the states were frequently at war with one another. Houses were clustered around the castles into which the inhabitants would withdraw and light fires as beacons when they were attacked.

The Hunzakut, described in 1891 as the "terror of all the people from Afghanistan to Yarkand", were particularly successful and enterprising brigands. They regarded their raiding as a right conferred on them by the proximity of the trade routes. Their ruler, the Mir, even exchanged gifts with the Chinese resident in Turkistan at Kashgar, while at the same time raiding the main caravan routes in his territory. Hearing from his agents of a rich caravan setting out from Yarkand south towards Leh, the Mir

(Left) A mountain wall rises behind the Mir's palace to cloud-capped peaks which the people of Hunza call the 'roof of the world'

Surrounded by his ministers, the Mir holds the daily *durbar*. The final authority in a land without police or jail is open to anyone with a grievance.

(Bottom) For centuries the Hunzakut terrorized the trade routes from Afghanistan to Yarkand. No caravan was safe from their savage raids.



Children have plenty of time to play and to practise the dances their elders perform at the annual marriage celebrations after the harvest.

had a goat sacrificed and its head paraded around in front of his men, then dispatched them east over the desolate Shimshal pass to set an ambush. From these caravans in the north-east the Hunzakut plundered jewelry, silks, animals and other goods. And from the south they took slaves – Balti, Nagari and Kashmiri – for sale to the Badaksh merchants in the north.

On occasions Hunza was attacked by Sikhs from Gilgit in the south but, well protected by her difficult passes, remained undefeated. In 1866 the Kashmiri attacked, again helped by the Nagari, but the Nagari sided with the people of Hunza to rout the expedition, capturing sepoys of the British Raj who could be sold in the slave markets of Turkistan.

In 1891 the British, fearing Imperial Russia's expansion south from the Pamirs towards India, dispatched a mission under Colonel Algernon Durand to ensure a military road and lines of communication back up through Hunza to the Pamirs. His armed force, attacking first up the Nagar bank of the river, inflicted the first military defeat on the Hunzakut. The precarious track up from Gilgit was widened to take pack animals; a telegraph line was installed up to Misgar near the Turkistan border, and a new Mir installed to replace the intriguing Safdar Ali who had fled over the roof of the world to Kashgar.

The new Mir, Sir Mohammed Nazim Khan KCIE, ruled peacefully over Hunza from 1892 to 1938. He was the first Mir for over a hundred years to die a natural death while still in office. He governed the distant parts of his realm by telephone, and in his lifetime the population of the valley increased from 6,000 to over 10,000. The multitude of villages grew, where possible, to meet this increase.

But the valley can only support a limited number of people. Hunzakut techniques of husbandry have exploited this land to the full. So much of the land is terraced into fields that there is only one road through Hunza and even that is nowhere more than six feet wide. Elsewhere the people must climb or walk in single file beside water channels or along the edges of the terraces. The terrace walls are carefully revetted up with stones, large at the bottom and small at the top, each locking into the next. They have even made land by building up a steep terrace wall on the mountainside, crushing or removing rocks from the inside and alternately flooding and draining the space between. Within a few years there is enough rock dust and mud to make a narrow strip field a few feet across.

Fields must have water but there is not enough rainwater for irrigation. Hundreds of feet below, the river is

Jan Mohammed earns his living as a teacher but at prayer and feast times he acts as a priest and leads the singing of love songs to the Prophet.

Women move to their husband's village on marriage but each returns home proudly with her new-born child for a visit which may last a year.

(Bottom) Although Muslim, the women of Hunza wear no veil, but an embroidered hat, scarf, and a brightly colored tunic and baggy trousers.

racing away down the gorge, its waters inaccessible. And so a system of narrow aqueducts carry water down from glaciers far above. The aqueducts are channeled out of the rock face or suspended along it in wooden troughs, crossing seemingly sheer mountain faces. These channels are up to six miles long and made and maintained with no better tools than wooden poles, shovels and soft iron picks. Like all other constructions here, aqueducts are made without mortar. When a section disappears in one of the frequent landslides, a man has to be lowered on the end of rope to construct the new ledge, wedging shallow stones into crevices, widening the shelf and padding in loose soil to complete the channel.

Although most villages have their own direct channel to the glacier, the water is never plentiful and has to be regulated. This is easily done and – except at certain times of the year, as during sowing – children operate the sluices. The people store their supply of water in stone-walled reservoirs, which are emptied by removing a wooden plug at times when water from the glaciers does not flow. In the summer children swim in these same pools. Drinking water is stored separately in similar dug-out pits that are roofed over and approached down steps to keep animals away.

There is little pasture in Hunza and few livestock. In summer sheep live on fruit and foliage in the villages; cattle are taken up the mountainside above 12,000 feet where they are herded by young boys. The boys also feed them with fodder and make a kind of butter from the meager fat produce. The trees are stripped of their leaves, the fields literally swept for tufts which, with the little hay they have is stored as winter fodder. And with few animals, dung for manure is scarce. It is normal for a small boy to follow a beast around with a small bowl, especially when the animal is in the village or being used to thresh crops, to collect the droppings. The dung is then stored, together with the odd twigs it has picked up, until the winter manuring of the fields. Fresh human dung, is also kept away from the fields and it is possible that this custom (together with the individual supply of glacier water to each village and a separate store of drinking water) has kept the Hunzakut free from the endemic goiter and epidemics that afflict the surrounding hill peoples.

In Hunza, fields are not only rotated, they are also used twice over each year. The barley fields of the late summer are sown with millet; the wheat fields, which ripen a few weeks later, are sown with winter buckwheat. This last crop is grown as an insurance, for buckwheat is hardy and can survive a bad winter. But the people have no real love of scones made from this buckwheat. Along with their own vegetables they also grow potatoes and tomatoes, introduced by the British, and then the summer is the season of abundant fruits – apricots, for one, are a staple also dried and stored for the winter.

In spite of their careful husbandry, food is often scarce in late winter. The animals, lean at the best of times, have to be kept in byres feeding on scant fodder during the winter cold. There is not enough of this to keep all the animals alive, nor enough stored food for the people themselves. Weeks before the new barley is ready most households run out of flour, and many run short of dried apricots and vegetables. At this time of year an animal killed for the winter festival of Tumushelling gives welcome meat to supplement this diet.

A child's portion of food depends on his age. An able-bodied man is entitled to double a woman's ration, and an expectant mother gets a larger share than the other women. It is the job of the chief housewife to store and ration out the foodstuffs over the whole year – a difficult job in which the experience of an old woman is much valued. If too much is given out in the summer months of plenty the family may starve before the next year. A wife's incompetence at this job is grounds for divorce.

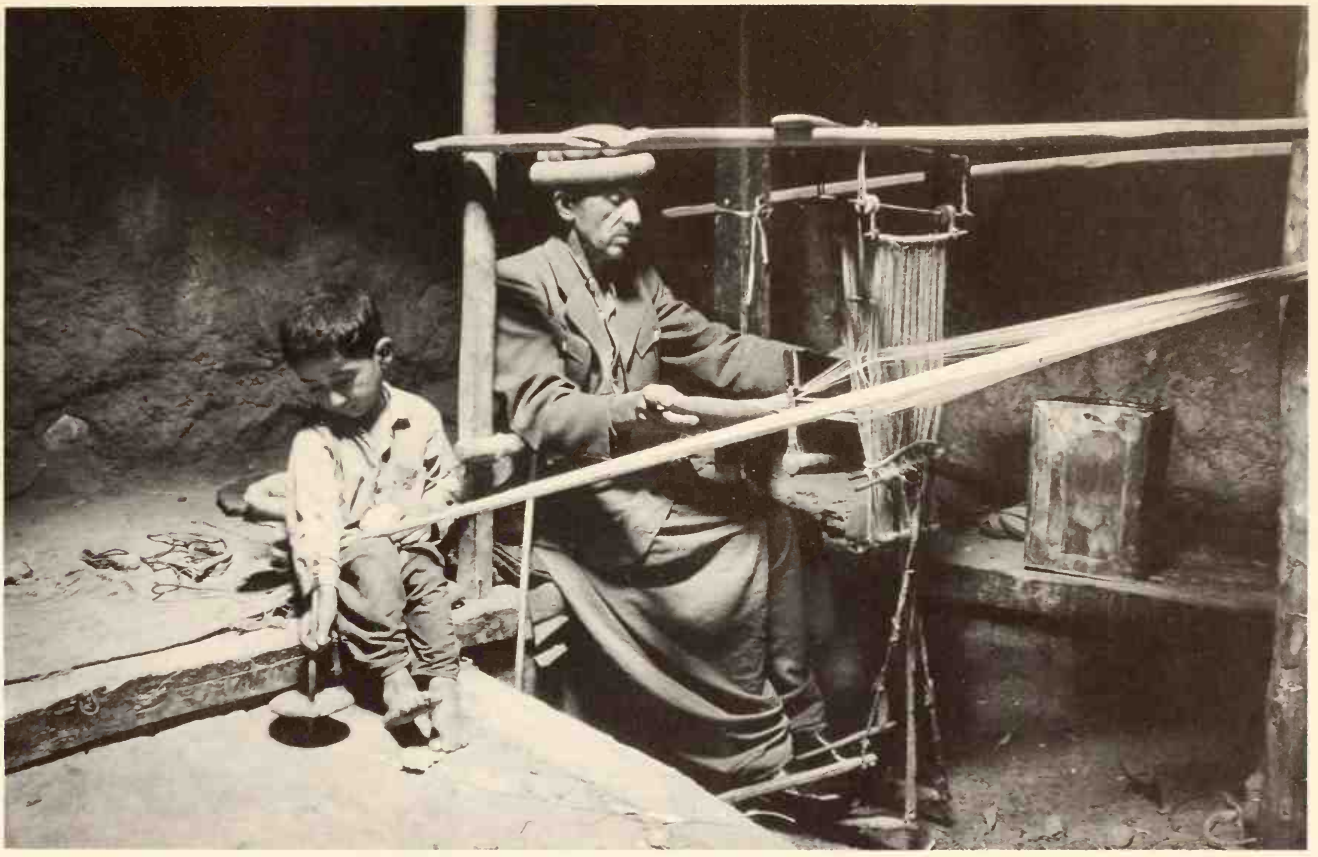
Among the people of Hunza a man and wife, his sons and their wives and their children all live and work together. In the winter cold, with temperatures well below zero, they all sleep together in the common living room on raised platforms around the walls, bachelors together, unmarried women together and couples together. During the day they sit around a small central fire from which smoke meanders outwards, filling the whole room and blackening the pillars and walls before finally escaping through the smoke-hole in the roof. There are no windows, and if it is very cold with snow or a powerful wind the skylight is shut leaving the room in darkness. Only the glow of the fire remains and as there is little fuel the fire itself burns slowly when the wife is baking chapatis or boiling vegetables. The women sew, bake and tend their babies. Outside it is gray and bleak, clouds hang low over the rocks, stark trees and desolate fields into which the men venture only occasionally, perhaps to break ice for water. Otherwise they stay inside with the family, mending their tools. Old people recount tales to the young; stories of their bygone brigand days and heroes, and of clan history and everyday events. This is their literature, the store of their wisdom from which the children learn of the life and ways of Hunza.

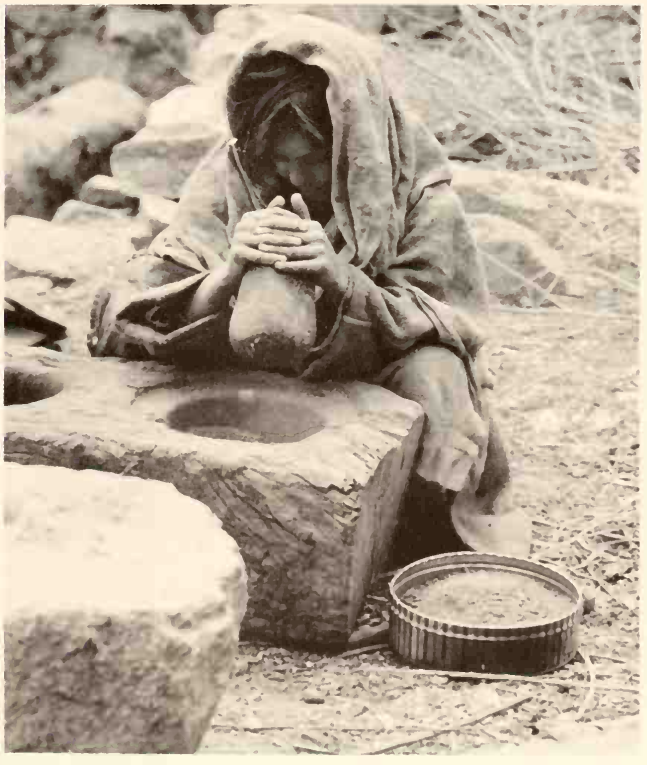
In the other world of the hot dry summer the people live out on the roof, spinning wool or drying apricots, talking and visiting with their neighbors, cooking and sleeping in the open. The houses are built in small groups within which the families co-operate with each other; harvesting, threshing and taking their grain to the miller together; exchanging gifts of food between each other.

(Top) Bericho bands of pipers, drummers and kettle drummers play all through wedding feasts, taunting the men whose dancing is not vigorous enough.

The people live outside in the hot dry summer and the village barber must take care not to become too interested in the gossip around him.

Every village has a weaver who makes the men's 9-foot-long cloaks, called *chogas*. The edges of the best, festival *chogas* are embroidered.





A housewife grinds grain to make chapatis of millet or wheat. In hard times she makes them with buckwheat, though they are less popular.

There is no hard and fast line between a man's and a woman's work. A man will happily drive the threshing team or look after a baby, a woman will readily work with a shovel, but normally the heavy jobs – plowing and maintaining the terraces – are done by men. In the evening men sit and smoke pipes of scarce tobacco picked from tiny plots in the corner of a field.

It is the children of the family who carry presents between houses. Perhaps they take early-ripening fruit to their mother's family in another village where fruit ripens later. The children help their parents in work only so long as they are interested. Otherwise they roam around in groups. Boys play a kind of football called *mindak* in which they kick a lead and cloth ball up into the air, and score by the number of times they keep it aloft. Girls practise embroidery, and all the children – boys and girls alike – play a game similar to rounders, or in twos, on each other's backs, play horses. Some retire to play with pebbles on a scratched-out piece of ground. The elder children willingly look after all the younger ones. It is quite impossible to tell whether it is their brother or sister or some neighbor's infant that they lead by the hand.

There are a few experts within the Burusho community, like millers and the master carpenter who fixes the doors on the houses and the weavers who make the men's nine-foot-long homespun cloaks called *chogas*. There is

Hunza Pakistan

High up on the mountainside with the village cattle, the young herdsman must make his own 'boots' to keep out the cold Himalayan wind.

(Bottom) Hunza has no doctor and a man must splint and bandage a broken foot himself or get the skilled village elders to take care of it.

Land is so precious in Hunza that there is only one road, barely 6 feet wide. Elsewhere, people must clamber along the edges of the terraced fields.

Storing and rationing out the food supply for the year is a wife's most important task. Incompetence is grounds for a divorce.

also a group of outsiders called the Bericho who work as blacksmiths and musicians in the villages. These Bericho are a separate community, with their own customs, language and village, and they do not marry among the Burusho. At one time the Burusho regarded them as inferior and would not accept food from them. Bericho blacksmiths tour the Hunza villages each year with their hammers, using a stone forge and bellows supplied by the villagers. They repair the few iron goods, the shears, tripods, sickles and plow tips, owned by the Burusho. In return each Burusho village pays a small annual tax to the Bericho community.

If there is a dispute between two people the first to try to settle it are the heads of the families. If the dispute is then between households they put it in front of the village's open court, known as a *durbar*, for each village is an administrative unit supervised by a headman appointed by the Mir. Plaintiffs can go still higher, to the *durbar* of 'the headmen of the four clans' at the capital Baltit; or even to the *durbar* of the Mir's advisor, the Wazir, with a final appeal to the daily governing *durbar* of the Mir himself. The Mir's decision in the *durbar*, as it is in all matters, is absolute and final. But court action does not pay in Hunza; it is customary for the winner of a case to thank the court with a gift roughly equal to the fine imposed on the loser. The extreme punishment that the Mir's court inflicts is banishment, generally to the oppressive Shimshal valley to tend the Mir's flocks for a number of years. Crime itself is rare; the censure of the community is a sufficient check on behavior.

There is a story of a young married woman who faked a fatal accident, leaving her hat at the side of the river gorge to make people think that she had fallen in and drowned, after which she went to live with another man. The pair were eventually discovered and, coming before the Mir's *durbar*, he judged that she should be divorced and married to her lover. The man's family did not approve, and one month later the woman committed suicide by walking off the cliff edge into the torrent below.

Girls are normally married by 16, boys by the age of 18. It is the parents who arrange the match. They take into account the desirability of marrying where the family has married before, a preference for marrying outside their own clan (which was part of the law until 1930). The desires of the girl and boy are secondary, but if the couple prove totally incompatible they can obtain a divorce. The families negotiate the marriage, exchanging gifts with an extra payment from the groom's family as a token recompense for the expense of bringing up a daughter. Not that a wife is utterly separated from her kin by moving to her husband's family's house. Visits sometimes lasting a year take her back to her family with a new-born child. Land and property are inherited by the sons of the house, but the wife-to-be receives a small dowry amongst which will be rights to certain of her family's fruit trees.

Although the Hunzakut are nominally Muslim their women are neither secluded nor veiled, but treated in an open and equal manner. The Hunzakut, whose previous religion is not known, became Muslims of the Shi'a sect 600 years ago when the royal family married with the royalty of Baltistan. It was only four generations ago that they converted to the freer Ismaili sect, with the Aga Khan as its spiritual head.

A part-time priest, a *khalifa*, supervises the marriage ceremony. He has been appointed by the Mir and qualifies for his position by being sufficiently literate in Parsee or Arabic to lead the Islamic prayers. The ceremony is conducted at the bride's family house in front of both families, and a few weeks later is followed by the great wedding day. This is a reciprocal feast for the men at the man's family house. But only after a further public celebration, which to the Hunzakut is known as the 'Great Wedding Day', can he take his new bride home. All the new marriages in each village are celebrated on this one day, appointed by the Mir, in the middle of December, after the harvest and sowing of the winter barley. People pack the entrance to their village, dressed in their brightest embroidered clothes. Women sport silken scarves, the men with colored shirts and embroidered rims to their *chogas*. The men and boys to be married wear a loose silk robe and a bright feathered turban instead of the normal round cap. The men dance, each bridegroom and his clan brothers dancing in turn in the clearing. Throughout there is the music of the Bericho band of drummers, pipers and kettledrummers who taunt the party if the dancers are not jumping or moving their arms vigorously enough.

Frequently the high-point of this celebration among the Burusho is a game of polo. Not the ordered western game but perhaps more as it used to be, for polo originally came from this part of Asia. It is a wild six-a-side rampage to the accompaniment of music that continues with neither interval nor change of mount until one team has scored nine goals. In Hunza valley every village has its long stretch of narrow field surrounded by a low stone wall, reserved for polo.

The main ground where Burusho polo is played at the capital is 300 yards long, and here the 70-year-old Mir sometimes starts the game. He gallops from one end holding the stick and ball in one hand, and as he approaches the center of the ground he throws the ball into the air and hits it hard – over 100 yards – before it touches the ground. He repeats this feat, known as *tamba*, no less than seven times in succession. It used to be just the losers who danced in the center of the field for the winners. Possibly this was a ritual sign of submission, but nowadays both the teams dance. The Burusho, whose name means arrow, used to hold archery competitions on horseback. But now there are few, if any, who still have this skill. The Burusho are no longer the terror of Yarkand, no longer arrows.

Glossary to the peoples of western and central Asia

In this area, stretching west to east from Turkey to the Indus and south to north from the Indian ocean to the Russian steppes, most of the people are basically caucasoid. The exceptions are a few mongoloid enclaves like the Hazara in Afghanistan, and a mongoloid strain is visible among many groups, especially in Soviet Asia.

The caucasoids of this area are similar to the Europeans from Greece to France. Most comparable to them are the highlanders of western Asia. They have light brown skins and black or dark brown hair. Their eyes are usually brown but there is a notable proportion of people with light eyes: gray, blue, green or hazel. Compared to Europeans the west Asian highlanders, especially the Armenians, have a lot of body hair. They have large, sometimes curly, beards, and bushy eyebrows that meet in a tuft in the middle. The hair on their heads is straight or wavy. They have high, narrow noses, straight or, more commonly, curved, and angular faces with jaw and forehead not much narrower than their mid-facial breadth. The lightest skins are seen along the Aegean coast of Turkey and the darkest on the Persian Gulf, particularly in Baluchistan. The color of their eyes gets darker from west to east as well. The percentage of light-colored eyes ranges from 85 per cent among the western Turks to less than 5 per cent among the Baluchi.

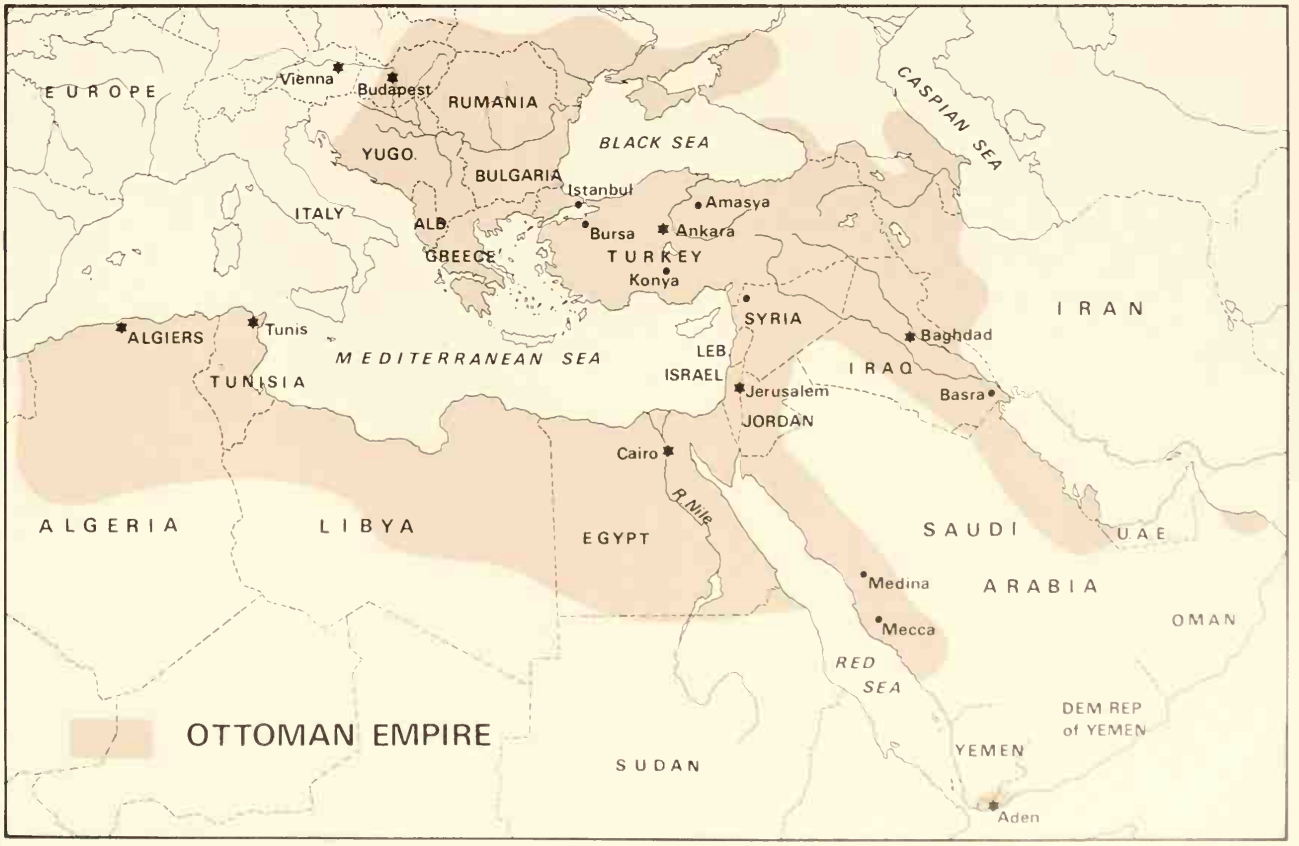
As one moves into the steppe lands of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and into northern Afghanistan, the highland west Asian influence is less pronounced. The Tajik are the north-easternmost representatives of the highland west Asians. They have sallow skins and nearly half of them have light-colored eyes. They are less hairy than the highlanders from further south. Some of them have mixed with the mongoloids and have epicanthine eye folds. But the Uzbek have even more mongoloid characteristics: some with upturned noses, weaker beard growths and more with epicanthine eye folds. Fewer have light eyes.

There are a few other racial influences too. The Arabs, who are strictly those people from the Arabian peninsula but who spread from Morocco to India after the 7th century, have intermixed with the peoples of the area. People who bear traces of Arab influence tend to be more lightly built with longer legs, smaller chests and finer hands and feet. In some of the gypsies of the area there are distinct traces of negro blood resulting from years of negro slavery.

The languages of this area are, on the whole, as uniform as the people. Most speak Indo-Aryan languages. The people of the steppes – the Turkomen, Kirghiz, Uzbek, Kazak and Uighur – all speak Turkic languages. In the Caucasus there are Caucasian speakers. The Brahui speak a Dravidian language and in this respect are unique to the area.

Most of the people in this area are Muslim. The Soviet states are officially atheist and there all religion is discouraged as superstition. In Iran they are mostly Shi'a Muslim. Unlike the Sunni Muslims, they believe the Caliph, or Imam, as they call him, should be a divinely appointed descendant of Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law. Sunni Muslims elect their Caliph. There are several different Shi'a sects who dispute the succession of Ali. The concept of divine rulers was part of the ancient Persian religion and is possibly the reason that Shi'a Muslims tend to come from Iran.

Some words in Arctic languages are similar to Turkish words. The Turks are thought to have originated in the Arctic region.



The Ottoman Empire, heir to the eastern Roman Empire, lasted from 1281 to 1924 and made its capital Istanbul, once called Constantinople.

ADYGE see CHERKESS

ADZHAR *Population:* 10,000. Language group: Caucasian. The Adzhar are a southern lowland tribe of Caucasian (q.v.) people living on the Black Sea coast near the Turkish border. They grow millet, barley, wheat, vegetables and vines. They are Muslim.

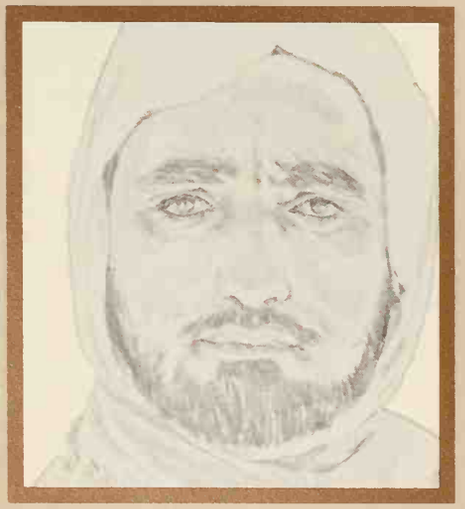
AFGHAN see PATHAN

AFRIDI see PATHAN

AISOR see ASSYRIANS

ALIELI see TURKOMEN

AL KATHIR see ARABS



ARABS *Population:* 900,000. Language group: Semitic. Arabs live scattered throughout central Asia. Turkey has some 300,000 but there are only 10,000 to 20,000 in the central Asian Russian Republics. Here they live in ancient communities scattered throughout the eastern oases. About half a million live in Iran. Several Arab tribes, chiefly the Al Kathir and Bani Lam, live in the Zagros mountains of southern Persia. And settled villages of Arab fishermen and fruit growers live along the Persian Gulf coast. There are still some Arab nomads and sheep herders. The Arabs are Sunni Muslim. A few in Afghan Turkistan retain their ethnic identity, but most in Afghanistan have been assimilated by other peoples, except for the Sayyid, a highly inbred self-isolating group who claim descent from the Prophet Mohammed.

ASERI see AZERBAIJANI

ASSYRIANS *Population:* 40,000. Language group: Semitic. The Assyrians live in the Soviet Armenian Republic, near lake Urmia in north-west Iran and in Iraq. Most of them are farmers who grow mainly millet, barley and wheat, but many others are mechanics in the cities. Some are mountaineers with a reputation as fierce, aggressive fighters. Many Assyrians fled to Russian territory at the end of World War I and now live mainly in the cities of the Caucasus, where they are called Aisor. Their religion—the Nestorian branch of Christianity—gives them a great cohesive force.

AVAR *Population:* 250,000. Language group: Caucasian. The Avar are north Caucasian (q.v.) people who live in the highlands of west Dagestan, USSR. In the 7th century they had a vast European Empire. Now they are stock-breeders and vegetable growers. In their homes they make Caucasian felt cloaks, leather and wooden goods, metalware, tapestries and embroidery. They are Sunni Muslim.

AWAN see HINDKI

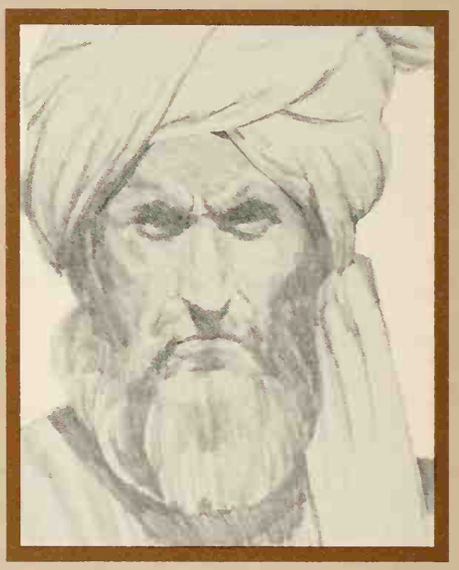
AYNARLU see KAMSEH

AZERBAIJANI *Population:* 4·1 million. Language group: Turkic. The Azerbaijani or Aseri live in northern Iran and the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic across the border. Some Azerbaijani are farmers whose main crops are wheat and rice. Others work in the oil fields. There are stock-raising families who migrate between summer and winter quarters, but most of the rural population in Russia now live on collective farms. Their traditional craft is rug-weaving. Village life alters little between Russia and Iran. They are all Shi'a Muslim although they are the most westernized of the Turkic-speaking groups.

BAHARLU see KHAMSEH

BAIKA see KHO

BAKHTIARI (pages 58-67)



BALUCHI *Population:* 1·1 million. Language group: Iranian. Most of the Baluchi tribes live in the Baluchistan area of Pakistan. Another half million live in Iran from the Gulf of Oman to Seistan on the Afghan border. In southern Turkmenistan there are 10,000. Everywhere their land is dry and inhospitable. Most of them are pastoral nomads, and have been for generations, but some are settled farmers who grow mainly wheat. Others are soldiers, policemen and rent collectors for the big landlords. The nomadic Baluchi are continually crossing the Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iranian borders and tend to engage in such profitable enterprises as smuggling. The Baluchi are Sunni Muslim.

BANI LAM see ARABS

BASSERI see KAMSEH

BELORUSSIAN see SLAVS

BERBERI see HAZARA MONGOLS

BESUD see HAZARA MONGOLS

BRAHUI *Population:* 600,000. Language group: Dravidian. Most Brahui live in Pakistan. About 250,000 live in various parts of Afghanistan and 100,000 in the Seistan region of Iran. Most Brahui are nomadic farmers and herdsmen. From March to October they settle down to grow cereals, mainly wheat and maize, fruit and vegetables. In November they move south with their fattened cattle and handicrafts, to work as seasonal laborers, returning north again in the spring. Many have settled in the Sind on land opened up for irrigation. They are Sunni Muslim.

CAUCASIANS *Population:* 3·5 million. Language group: Caucasian. The Caucasian peoples live in the narrow mountain valleys from the northern slopes of the Caucasus southward into Georgia and Azerbaijan. They speak many different dialects but their customs and religion—Sunni Muslim—are similar. Many groups have a history of long resistance to Russian rule and are fiercely independent. Most of them are farmers and stock-breeders. In the more inaccessible hills they hunt and occasionally raid their more settled neighbors. They are excellent shots and horsemen and preserve a romantic reputation despite widespread poverty and disease. The giving of bridewealth, bride capture and family blood feuds persist today in some areas. Western dress is now beginning to replace their ages-old long coats, cartridge belts and fleece caps. The rich Caucasian folklore includes the Prometheus legend and, in the north, the epic of the *Narts*, or mythical heroes.

CHAHAR AIMAQ (pages 112-113)

CHERKESS *Population:* 80,000. Language group: Caucasian. The Cherkess or Adyge are Caucasian (q.v.) people who live in the north-west Caucasus near the Black Sea. There are several thousand more in northern Turkey. They are pastoral farmers, horse-breeders and fruit growers. Until recently the Cherkess had slaves. They are officially Sunni Muslim although there have been recent reports of still-existent early cults, associated with thunder, fertility rites and the sacred grove.

CHITRALI see KHO

CHUGI see GYPSIES

DAGH CHUFUTI see TAT

DARZADA see MAKRANI

DERVISH (pages 56-57)

DHUND see HINDKI

DUNGAN *Population:* 40,000. Language group: Sinitic. The Dungan or Tung-an are a small group of Chinese Muslims settled along the Chu river in the Soviet Republics of Kirghizia and Kazakstan. They found refuge here after an unsuccessful revolt against the Manchu dynasty of China in the 1870s. They are now skilled farmers who are said to have exerted a strong cultural influence. They are believed to have initiated rice and tea cultivation in the Fergana valley.

ERSARI see TURKOMEN

FEILI LUR see LUR

FIRUZ KUHI see CHAHAR AIMAQ

GASHGAI see QASHQA'I

GERMANS *Population:* 750,000. Language group: Germanic. These Germans live mostly in Kazakstan in the USSR where they work on collective farms and in the cities. They were once the Volga Germans who were exiled to Soviet Central Asia during World War II when several autonomous republics in southern Russia were liquidated on the orders of Stalin.

GHAKAR see HINDKI

GUJAR see HINDKI

GUKLAN see TURKOMEN

GYPSIES *Population:* 50,000. Gypsies live in most central Asian countries as a small minority. Those in the Soviet Union are known as Luli or Chugi. There are about 8,000 in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The Soviet government attempted to settle them on collective farms but most of them remain nomadic. The 30,000 Iranian gypsies who live mainly in the Caspian provinces are nomads, following their traditional crafts and trades, such as basketmaking, carving and smithing.

HAZARA MONGOLS (pages 114-117)

HINDKI *Population:* 250,000. Language group: Indo-Aryan. The Hindki tribes live scattered throughout the central part of Pakistan's northern frontier area. They are Sunni Muslim of Indian origin and include the Awan, Gujar, Karral, Dhund and Ghakar peoples. The Gujar live among the Yusufzai Pathan, serving them as artisans and peasant farmers. The hill Hindki are very poor. Some

are tenants, cultivating land for others, and some are nomadic graziers.

HUNZA (pages 126-135)

JAMSHIDI see CHAHAR AIMAQ

JEWS *Population:* 270,000. Language group: Semitic. Jews are a minority in all the central Asian countries. Most of them live in much the same way as their neighbors whether they be Kazak (q.v.), Persian (q.v.) or Turks (q.v.). There are 75,000 Iranian Jews who have been in Persia since ancient times and who all speak Persian today. The Jews preserve their ethnicity, including their religion, by inbreeding and segregation. They usually live in the cities where they are merchants, importers and money-lenders. There are nearly 160,000 Jews in Soviet central Asia and some 20,000 in Georgia. There have been small Jewish communities in Afghanistan for centuries, particularly in Herat, Kabul and in the cities of Afghan Turkistan. In Turkey they are a small minority, living mostly around Istanbul and Izmir.

KABARDIN *Population:* 300,000. Language group: Caucasian. The Kabardin are part of the western group of north Caucasian (q.v.) peoples who live along the Kuban and upper Terek river basins. Several thousand others live in northern Turkey. They grow crops, especially millet, barley and wheat, and vegetables. They breed cattle, and horses for which they are famed. Once there was a Kabardin prince and a feudal aristocracy. Most of them are Sunni Muslim but a few around Mozdok are Christian.

KAFIR see NURISTANI

KARAKALPAK *Population:* 250,000. Language group: Turkic. Most of the Karakalpak live in the USSR near the southern shores of the Aral sea. There are several thousand in Afghanistan. 'Karakalpak' means 'Black caps', referring to the black fleece headgear of the men. They are nearly all farmers, growing wheat, barley, maize and cotton. On the desert pastures they raise cattle and Karakul sheep. The Karakalpak are Muslim.

KARRAL see HINDKI

KATURE see KHO

KAZAK *Population:* 4 million. Language group: Turkic. The Kazak are widely scattered throughout Kazakhstan in the USSR and Afghanistan, where many have assimilated with the Uzbek (q.v.) people. Only in the city of Herât do they live in a single compact settlement. The Kazak are Turko-Mongols. Traditionally they were divided into 'hordes'. They lived in *yurts*, raised horses and cattle and loved horse-racing and falconry. Now they are mostly settled cultivators, growing wheat, barley and maize. They were vigorous resisters of Sovietization and many were killed or deported to forced labor camps, and their traditional territory has now been mostly colonized by Russians. Numerous others emigrated to China. Kazak religion has some Islamic elements but these are incorporated into an indigenous religion which includes shamans, clans and ancestor cults. The Kazak shaman or *bagsha* is believed to be especially adept at curing nervous diseases, besides combating fevers, rheumatism and paralysis.

KHAMSEH *Population:* 90,000. Language groups: Iranian, Turkic and Semitic. The Khamseh tribes pivot around the town of Shiraz in the southern Iranian province of Fars. They are made up of five main tribes – Arabs (q.v.), Baharlu, Aynarlu, Basseri and Nafar who joined together to resist the Qashqa'i (q.v.). It is a political alliance and the ways of life of these peoples continue to vary. The Arabs, who speak Arabic and Persian dialects, are nomads at heart and those who settle down to farm are generally poor and unsuccessful. The nomadic Arabs hire out their mules and camels for transport. They are good rug-weavers and produce most of the Fars carpets. The Nafar live in a dry and barren region. The Aynarlu and Baharlu are Turkish speakers. The Basseri are the richest tribe. They are nomadic pastoralists who move their sheep and goats in a north-south direction, living in small camps along the way. They have a chain of market contacts on their route to whom they can sell their animals and handicrafts. They are increasingly becoming settled farmers.

KHO *Population:* 100,000. Language group: Indo-Aryan. The Kho, or Chitrali, live in the remote mountain valleys of Pakistan's northern frontier. They are a group of tribes, the most important of whom are the Kature, Khushwaqti, Rezakhel, Khoshne and Baika. They farm, raise cattle, weave cloth and make carpets. In winter thousands of the young men migrate to the plains as manual laborers, to build roads etc. Each household has a fruit orchard attached. Kho society is graded into the *adamzada*, the nobility, headed by the family of the ruler or *mehtar*, the *arbabzada*, the petty officials and tradespeople, and the *fakir-i-miskin*, the 'people of poverty'. Polo is the national sport and most Kho are fond of music, dancing and festivities. They are Sunni Muslim.

KHOSHNE see KHO

KHUSHWAQTI see KHO

KIRGHIZ (pages 74-79)

KOHISTANI *Population:* 209,000. Language group: Indo-Aryan. The Kohistani include several different racial groups and languages, the apparent result of centuries of intermingling of Chinese, Mongol (q.v.), Iranian (q.v.) and Pathan (q.v.) with the original Aryan invaders. They live in the northern Hazara, Gilgit, Upper Swat and Chitral regions of Pakistan. One tribe, the Swati, who live along the upper Indus, are thought to be the original inhabitants of the Swat valley. They are called Kohistani by the Pathan. The name also means 'people of the mountains'. They cultivate wheat and other grain crops on terraced fields, irrigated and plowed by bullocks. They breed oxen, buffalo, sheep, goats and donkeys. Between summer and winter they move their herds from as high as 14,000 feet down to 2,000 feet. Most families have houses in four or five different settlements and nearly the whole population is concentrated throughout the year in the altitude appropriate to the season. Most Kohistani are Shi'a Muslim.

KOREANS *Population:* 220,000. Language groups: Slavic and Korean. The Koreans or 'Kulaks' of central Asia were sent to Uzbekistan and Kazakstan from Korea, under the Soviet régime of the 1930s, possibly because of their resistance to collectivization. They formerly lived in villages scattered throughout the areas where rice could be grown. Now they are successful pig and poultry breeders and are good at vegetable growing. In Uzbekistan most of them grow cotton, as well as rice. Their collective farms have acquired a certain fame because of their success.

KUHGILUYE see LUR

KULAK see KOREANS

KUMYK *Population:* 135,000. Language group: Turkic. The Kumyk live on the northwest shores of the Caspian sea in the lower regions of Soviet Dagestan. They farm, breed cattle and fish. They are Sunni Muslim.

KURDS (pages 36–43)

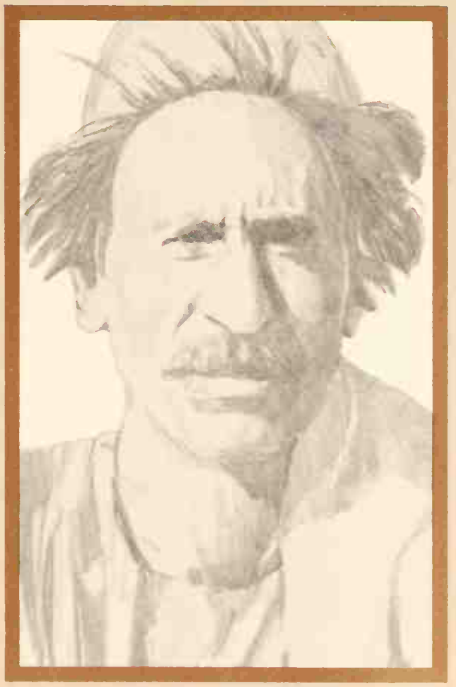
LASSI *Population:* 70,000. Language group: Indo-Aryan. The Lassi live in the former Las Bela state of Pakistan. Most of them are poor farmers, but many have to seek employment in Karachi and Sind. They are Muslim.

LAZ *Population:* 60,000. Language group: Caucasian. Most Laz live on the Black Sea coast, east of Trabzon in Turkey. About 1,000 live in Soviet Caucasia between Batum and Trabzon. They cultivate millet, barley and wheat, and fish and trade. They are Sunni Muslim.

LEZGIN *Population:* 100,000. Language group: Caucasian. The Lezgin are north Caucasian (q.v.) people who live along the Samur river in southern Dagestan, USSR. They breed cattle and grow crops, especially millet, barley, wheat and vegetables. In their homes they make tapestries and wrought-iron ware. They are Sunni Muslim.

LORI see MAKRANI

LULI see GYPSIES



LUR *Population:* 2 million. Language group: Iranian. The Lur are a confederation of four main groups: Feili Lur (Lesser Lur), Bakhtiari (q.v., Greater Lur), Kuhgiluye and Mamassani. They live south of the Kurds (q.v.) in the Zagros mountains of Iran. They are a proud people with a reputation among the settled Iranians of being great hunters. The Mamassani are particularly inaccessible and fierce. The Lur are nomadic and semi-nomadic sheep herders. They grow a few crops but often buy their staple foods of wheat and barley from sedentary valley dwellers. They wear simple black clothing. They are Shi'a Muslim.

MAKRANI *Population:* 160,000. Language group: Indo-Aryan. The name 'Makrani' covers the tribes in the Makran area of Pakistan, including Darzada, Nakib, Lori and Med peoples. Many of the tribes are occupational groups: most Darzada, for example, are landless laborers and most Lori are poor artisans. Some of them are by tradition gypsies, tinkers and minstrels who display marked negroid features and have moved into Karachi as stevedores and unskilled laborers. The rural Makrani keep sheep, goats, camels, donkeys and buffalo and are renowned for greyhound breeding. They are also famed for their embroidered leather work. The Med are a coastal fishing group. The wandering Lori are jugglers, palmists and fortune tellers. The favorite sports of the Makrani are wrestling and racing. Most of them are Sunni Muslim and have a firm belief in the powers of holy men (*pirs*) and spirits.

MAMASSANI see LUR

MED see MAKRANI

NAFAR see KHAMSEH

NAKIB see MAKRANI

NOGAI *Population:* 41,000. Language group: Turkic. The Nogai live on the northern foothills of the Russian Caucasus between the lower Kuma and Telek rivers. They are

farmers and cattle-breeders. The Nogai are Sunni Muslim.

NURISTANI (pages 118-125)

PAKHTUN see PATHAN

PATHAN (pages 86-99 and 100-111)

PERSIANS (pages 44-55)

PUSHTUN see PATHAN

QAJAR *Population:* 70,000. Language group: Turkic. The Qajar are a small Iranian tribe who live along the Elburz in Mazanderan and Gilan. They produced a dynasty of shahs who ruled Persia from 1796 until 1926. Once they were nomadic but most are now settled wheat and maize growing farmers. They are Muslim.

QARAMA see TURKOMEN

QASHQA'I *Population:* 300,000. Language group: Turkic. The Qashqa'i or Gashgai are the largest single tribe in the Fars area of southern Iran. They have been described as one of the happiest and best organized of the big tribal groups that have survived the measures the late Reza Shah took to control them. Their annual migration from the Isfahan area to the Persian Gulf is the longest in Iran. Their flocks provide them with milk products and with wool to weave or to sell. They also grow cereals, and their orchards and nut tree groves provide them with extra income. The horses they breed are famous. Their black tents, made of goat hair, are woven by the women. Theoretically the tribe's *khan* or chief decides the migration route and the allocation of the grazing land to the herding units. Their costume is distinguished by a felt cap, with flaps which they often turn up. The Qashqa'i have been politically active and the former Shah's effort to disarm them led to the imprisonment and death of their chief. They are Shi'a Muslim.

QIZIL BASH *Population:* 110,000. Language group: Iranian. The Qizil Bash or 'Red Heads' are so called because of the red caps they wear. They live scattered throughout Afghanistan. One group occupies a quarter of Kabul where, unlike the rest of the people, they are Shi'a Muslim. They hold respected positions as clerical officials in government offices. Some of them are traders and craftsmen. Another colony of Qizil Bash live in the high valleys of Foladi, at the western edge of the Hazarajat.

REZAKHEL see KHO

RUSSIANS see SLAVS

SARIQ see TURKOMEN

SAYYID see ARABS

SHAHSAVAN *Population:* 100,000. Language group: Turkic. The Shahsavan live south-west of the Caspian Sea in the Azerbaijan area of Iran. There is a smaller group near Teheran. The Shahsavan or 'followers of the Shah' consist of several tribes set up in this area to protect the Shah's interests. The nomadic Shahsavan have their summer pastures at the foot of the Sabalan mountains and their winter pastures at Dashte-Moghan. The tribal heads or *begs* organize and coordinate the migration, and have lately become intermediaries between tribe and government. Due to the joint Irano-Russian irrigation project on the Aras river many Shahsavan have become settled farmers.

SLAVS *Population:* 14 million. Language group: Slavonic. Russian Slavs live throughout Soviet central Asia in the countryside as well as in the cities. Originally they brought several innovations such as potatoes and pigs to the area. In Kazakstan they outnumber the Kazak (q.v.). The farming Russians are mainly grain growers but many work in the cities. There are about 6·5 million Russians in the Caucasus. The Ukrainians and Belorussians, other Slavic peoples, each number over one million in the central Asian Republics. There is a small Bulgar minority in Turkey.

SWATI see KOHISTANI

TAIMANNI see CHAHAR AIMAQ

TAIMURI see CHAHAR AIMAQ

TAJIK (pages 80-85)

TALYSH *Population:* 150,000. Language group: Iranian. Most Talysh live on the Caspian coast in the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, but some 50,000 live in the Caspian district of Iran. They grow crops and vegetables, raise stock and have cottage industries. They all know Aseri as a second language. Most Talysh are Sunni Muslim but there is a Shi'a minority.

TAT *Population:* 90,000. Language group:

Iranian. The Tat live in south-western Azerbaijan, USSR, mainly on the Apsheron peninsula. They grow vegetables and millet, barley and wheat. In their homes they make tapestries and metalware. Nearly all of them can speak Aseri (q.v.) as a second language. They are Shi'a Muslim, except for 8,000 Tat-speaking Jews known as Dagh Chufuti or 'Mountain Jews'.

TATARS *Population:* 1 million. Language group: Turkic. The Kazan Tatars have lived in central Asia since the 18th century. Many more joined them in 1945 when the Soviet government exiled thousands of Crimean Tatars. By tradition the Tatars are teachers, missionaries and merchants. Their eminent position is due to the strategic position of Kazan and to their historical relations with the Kazak (q.v.) and Uzbek (q.v.). Most Tatars live in the cities. They are Muslim but are more russianized than any other Muslim people.

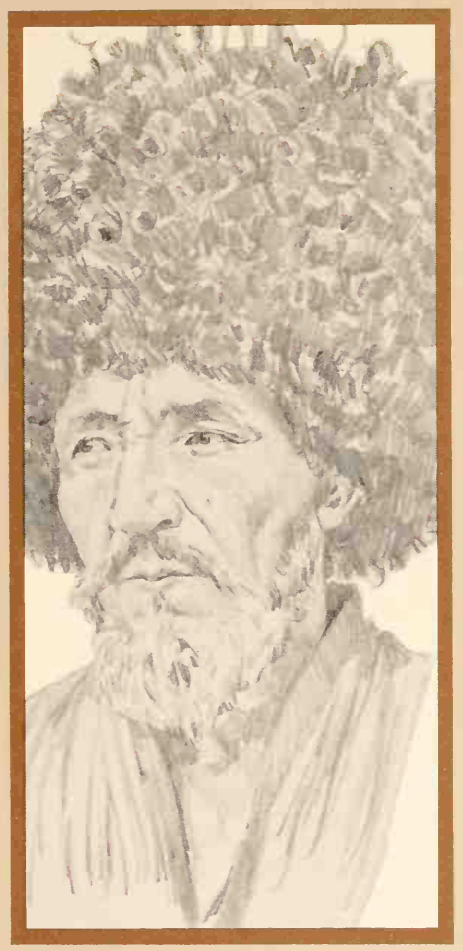
TEKKE see TURKOMEN

TROGLODYTES (pages 32-35)

TUNG-AN see DUNGAN

TURKS (pages 24-31)

TURKOMEN *Population:* 1·5 million. Language group: Turkic. Most of the Turkomen or Turkmen, live in Turkomeniya in southern Russia, but they also extend into northern Iran and north-west Afghanistan. There are several Turkomen tribes each centered on an oasis. The two great Turkomen tribes of Iran, the Guklan and the Yamut, were once raiders. A few of the Yamut are still nomadic but most Turkomen are now settled farmers. Near the Caspian sea they are fishermen, sailors and traders. Those in Afghanistan supplement their stock-breeding by cultivating crops, but they still live in dome-shaped tents. Others have become impoverished village-dwelling servants. Much of their cultivation depends on the Uzbek (q.v.) constructed irrigation facilities. Almost



all Turkomen have large herds of sheep, goats, horses and camels. They wear high fleeced caps and long fur-lined coats. In summer they wear a brightly colored light gown called a *khala'at*. Turkomen women are renowned for the Bukhara rugs which they weave. Most Turkomen are Muslim.

UIGHUR *Population:* 180,000. Language group: Turkic. The Uighur live in several small groups near Alma-Ata in the Kazak Soviet Republic. A further four million live in the Chinese province of Sinkiang. The Uighur are closely akin to the Uzbek (q.v.) in looks, language and customs, although in their farming techniques and food habits particularly they have been influenced by the Chinese. Most of them are now collective farmers. They are devout Sunni Muslim. Uighur shamans or *bakshi* practise their curing techniques in a state of trance. Uighur make pilgrimages to the holy man's tomb *(mazar)* for help with spiritual and practical problems.

UKRAINIANS see SLAVS

UZBEK (pages 68-73)

YAMUT see TURKMEN

YURUK *Population:* 5,000. Language group: Turkic. The Yuruk live in the remoter parts of northern and central Turkey. They preserve in a relatively pure form the language, economy, customs and probably the physical type of the old Turks who migrated from central Asia. The Yuruk are semi-nomadic shepherds and it is difficult to estimate their exact numbers.

All population figures are approximate.